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# MYSTERY MAGAZINE

DETECTIVE STORIES

JANUARY 15, 1923 VOL. V No. 124

FEATURING

## THE SECRET OF ROOM 13

by Hamilton Craigie

# MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Vol. V JANUARY 15, 1923 No. 124

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURE STORY

THE SECRET OF ROOM 13. By Hamilton Craigie ..... 3

SERIAL STORY

THE GORILLA—PART II. By Katherine Stagg ..... 21

SHORT STORIES

THE LURE OF A KISS. By Jack Bechdolt ..... 15
A SPLASH OF GREEN PAINT. By Lloyd Lonergan ..... 27
THE GAME OF BUNCO. By An Ex-Detective ..... 33
ALL COPPERS AREN'T EASY. By John Bradford Main ..... 37
SCIENTIFIC CONVICTION OF CRIMINALS. By Carl H. Getz ..... 41
THE RED BANDANNA. By Edgar Daniel Kramer ..... 44
THREE TWENTY-DOLLAR BILLS ..... 48
IN THE VAULT. By T. F. T. West ..... 54

MISCELLANEOUS MATTER

NEW THIEVERY ..... 14
THIEVES GET DIAMONDS WORTH $75,000 ..... 20
LUCKY PRISONERS ..... 32
JUDGE LOCKED IN VAULT ..... 36
A SLIPPERY CONVICT ..... 40
FIRE DEPARTMENT SUPERSTITIONS ..... 43
QUIT PRISON IN PAY PROTEST ..... 53

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# A Surprise Coming

THE next number of this magazine is going to contain one of the finest detective stories we have ever published. It was written by the celebrated George Bronson Howard and is entitled "Six Months to Live." Every reader of current literature knows what a clever writer of detective stories Mr. Howard was. There is a charm in his graceful style of composition and his plots are so ingenious that he grips your interest all through the story. Do not miss reading this masterpiece of detective fiction. It is simply splendid.

Many of our readers will be interested in the second article we are going to publish by Carl H. Getz. It will be entitled "Fingerprints in Crime Detection," and contains a very interesting account of the most modern methods employed by our police department to secure the conviction of people charged with deeds of violence. This article is handled by an expert who thoroughly understands his subject, and—well, we are sure it will prove to be very interesting to you.

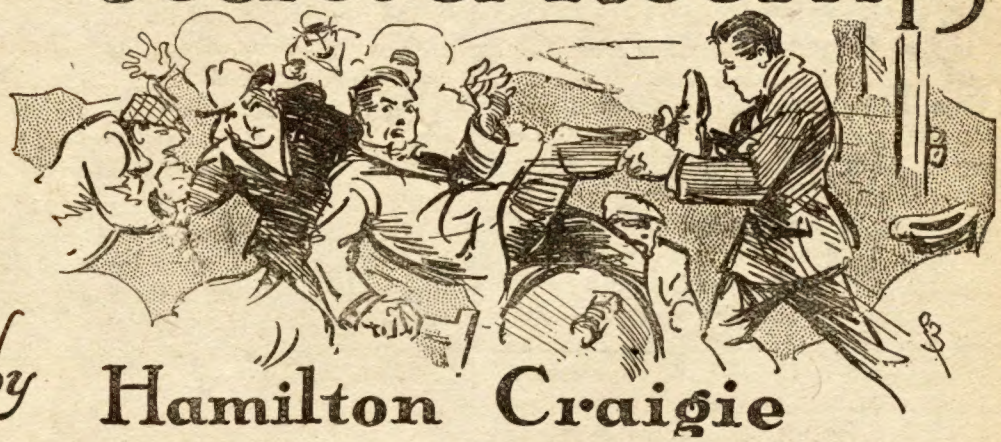
There will be a large number of short stories, too. We have no space to enumerate them here, but take our word for it they are going to please you. Most of them are exciting detective stories, crammed full of dramatic scenes, lively incidents and pretty love themes.

We will also begin a new two-part serial by Warren W. Van Gorden. It is a rousing detective story called "The Paper Clue," and is of that quality which grips and holds you breathless from beginning to end. The short articles are both numerous and interesting.

The contest ends in the next number with the issue of Coupon No. 6, and we trust that our readers will exert themselves to get as many coupons as possible. Of course all contestants cannot win, but those who send us the largest number of coupons will certainly get a cash prize. Do your best to get a large number of coupons and mail them to us **after the contest closes.** You will get a decision soon afterward.

THE EDITOR.

# The Secret of Room 13



by Hamilton Craigie

## CHAPTER ONE

MIDNIGHT. It was a black night, without stars or moon, and seemed made for the prowling of jungle-cats, furtive and swift, of the underworld.

The rusty fire-escape creaked under pressure of a careful footfall; there was the soft clink of iron against iron. A shadow, like a mere blotch of deeper blackness against the background, rose opposite a square of window. There was the snick of steel; long fingers, reaching, fumbled a moment with the catch; the window rose, and the bright beam of a flashlight stabbed into the gloom.

Jerry, the yegg, peered, blinking, into the darkness of that room, while the flash danced, glimmering upon floor and wall, steadied, crept up and up, downward in a sudden swoop, across the worm-eaten flooring, then toward the bed.

There came a sudden gasp, a smothered oath from Jerry, then a stumbling rush. The flashlight clattering to the floor had turned that darkened square of window as the intruder, in a desperate, clawing scramble, climbed out again. He went down that rusty fire-escape now as if on wings, pausing a moment in the alley's mouth; then, turning and doubling like a hare, he was away.

Pausing a moment under the sputtering arc at the corner, his face showed greenish-gray; then he was gone into the shadows.

Jerry, the yegg, remorseless, with the desperate, cold courage of a cornered grizzly, had fled without a backward glance. And from what? What was it that had so frightened him?

Beneath the dingy fanlight of that room the door was solid, like a fort. The house itself was old, decrepit, its boarded windows and barred doorway brooding above a dingy shop whose window was lettered in a queer, sprawling script: "Varieties." And Jerry had blundered into it. He was a stranger in the neighborhood; the winding streets and alleys of the "village" had led him, by devious turning, into that alley, up that rusty stair.

He had spotted a substantial brick-and-stucco residence, the sixth, counting from the corner, where the narrow street made a half-turn to the north.

But the yegg had blundered. Now, as he fled westward along the silent street, a strong shudder shook him at the remembrance of that which he had seen back there

in that darkened room, that held an odor, somehow, of decay and death.

"Three fingers, neat—that's what I'm needing!" he muttered, halting a moment where the soaring girders of the "L" made a dim tracery against the background of the night.

He had fled into the night, and from what?

First, as he entered, he had been conscious of an odor, and at first he could not place it. Then, as his flashlight rested upon that bed, he had been aware of a face—and yet not a face, rather a white blur, shifting and changing even as he watched. From the place that should have been its mouth there had issued a peculiar sound, for it was nothing human. That smell and the sight of that face and the sound of a voice that was yet not a voice had sent him out of that window and down that ladder as if the devil himself had arisen there.

The thing that Jerry had seen, peering and gibbering at him from the shadows, was apparently a man and yet not a man. If he had but known it this object was unseen, unheard, forgotten almost for three long years. He was a prisoner without shackles and yet chained—chained to the wheel of a satanic vengeance. For, if you had been in that room, you would have observed that on the inside of that door there was no knob; it was smooth from top to bottom. And the window could open only to any one who might have entered from *without*.

It was a prison for the creature that waited there—waited for the end. And beneath the crusted fanlight of the door, crossed and recrossed with cobwebs and plied thick with dust, there were the numerals 13.

---

## CHAPTER TWO

GREGORY VINSON, sergeant of detectives, had been talking to his chief, Inspector Haggerty, when there came the trill of the desk phone at his elbow. A moment the detective listened, his keen, good-humored face grim, unsmiling. Then he said:

"Ambulance case. Beth-Salem Hospital, chief." He bit the words off short, turning to the stocky, broad-shouldered man with the iron-gray mustache. "Clancy thinks I'd better go. He says——"

His voice went on, scarcely above a whisper, and at what he said the grim face opposite his own changed, the lips a thin line beneath the heavy mustache.

"It may be, Greg; it may be," said the inspector. "You never can tell, and it's three years now, but from what Clancy says——"

But with these words Vinson was at the door; it had closed after him even as the inspector, head sunk upon his chest, was muttering while staring at the floor:

"Three years—three years!"

He turned heavily to the papers on his desk, but his gaze was unseeing, or rather he was seeing again the straight, well-set-up figure of Detective Stephen O'Hare as he had seen it on that day three years in the past. It was the day that O'Hare had disappeared, dropping from sight as though the earth had opened and swallowed him.

Detective O'Hare had made an enviable record. Feared and hated in the purlieus of the underworld, they had sworn to get him. And they had succeeded. All the resources of the department—money and men and a search that had lasted now for three bitter years—had availed them nothing. O'Hare had disappeared; of him there was not a trace.

The police now were certain that he was dead, all but Detective Vinson and Inspector Haggerty. On the day of O'Hare's disappearance he had been seen by a dozen men who knew him; and, as it chanced, it had been his partner, Vinson, with whom he had had the last word. That had been at the corner of little West Twelfth and Seventh, but Vinson, somehow, was certain that he was not dead.

Haggerty lifted tired eyes now from the blotter as the door swung inward and Vinson entered.

The sergeant of detectives was breathing hard, as if he had been running, a pulse in his temple throbbing with quick violence.

"Well?" asked the inspector, his strong

hand clenching and unclenching upon the desk-top. "Well?"

Vinson spoke in a harsh whisper:

"Ambulance case. Jerry, the yegg, alias 'Cincy Slim,' the Western crook, was picked up in a gun battle in West Tenth street, chief, and——"

He paused, moistening his dry lips; then he went on, still in that same harsh whisper:

"Out of his head when I got there; died five minutes after that. He talked, though, before he went. That's why Clancy got me on the wire. Seems that he had been on a 'touch' just before he was shot. He raved about a face that was not a face; kept talking about seeing the devil in ambush somewhere in the village. I couldn't made out where; I don't think he knew, himself, but —do you know what I think, chief?"

He bent forward, resting his hand upon the desk-top, and added:

"Remember that note? We never could trace it, just before Steve dropped out? You know what it said: about a 'living death' and 'vengeance'? Nobody seemed to take much stock in it but you and me. Now, what I think, and I *feel* that I'm right, is this: Steve O'Hare is alive somewhere, *buried* alive, and I'm going to find him!"

For an interval there was a little silence. Then the inspector lifted his grizzled head, eyeing his subordinate across the desk.

"You think it was Steve this fellow saw? You know, Greg, it's three years since he vanished, and that's a long time!"

Vinson's eyes narrowed at the corners, his mouth hardening to a thin line. When he spoke his voice was low, even, controlled; yet beneath it there ran a hint of iron.

"Three years; yes, chief, three years of *a living death.* You remember they hated Steve, but they had good reason to hate him! I'll find him, and when I do——"

Vinson left the sentence unfinished, turning to Haggerty, an unspoken question on his lips. The inspector inclined his head, his hard eyes softening. O'Hare had been his right bower; Vinson had taken his place, but he had never forgotten the man whose disappearance had remained the one big mystery that the department had never been able to solve. Now he lifted his great fist, brought it down upon the desk without sound.

It was a gesture characteristic of the inspector—the man's force, violent but controlled—and there was something of this violence hard-held with which he turned now to Vinson.

"You find him, Greg; you can do it, even after three years! I'm banking on you! And now good-by and good luck!"

They clasped hands in silence, and for a moment so remained, and the same thought was in the minds of each, the same picture: a man, tall and strong, in the first flush of his young manhood—Stephen O'Hare, as they had known him three years in the past. Abruptly Vinson shivered, but it was not cold.

"Some one's walking over my grave, chief," he said, with a forced lightness. "But I think it's a long way from here, at that."

He turned, walking toward the door.

So O'Hare had looked, Haggerty was thinking, on that day three years in the past, virile, upstanding, alive to his very fingertips. Something, some inner voice, unbidden, as if a phantom had stood there at his elbow, seemed urging him to speak, to recall the man even then going through that door. He grinned, a twisted grimace. He was getting fanciful in his old age—too much coffee, and too many strong cigars; that was it.

But he half rose from his chair as the door slammed shut with a hollow crash. Vinson was gone.

A wind, rising, rattled the windows in their frames, as if in the grasp of an impatient, angry hand. Vinson was gone. And it would be many a long day before the inspector would see him in the flesh.

---

## CHAPTER THREE

A MAN, walking with a slouching shuffle, turned out of Bleecker street into West Fourth. Hands fluttering, mouth

twitching at the corners, he stood staring a moment at the looming figure of a patrolman, the sunlight winking on the brass buttons as the officer passed him with a majestic stride, club swinging from its rawhide thong.

The derelict seemed to shrink within himself, flattening his lean body against a near-by wall, but the officer appeared oblivious, his gaze, in an incurious stare, passing onward and away.

With the cop's figure small in the distance, the shabby nondescript, peering under his battered felt hat, fumbled a moment at his twitching lips, then, raising his right hand in a peculiar gesture, he turned, sauntering onward to the park and its greenery just beyond.

But, besides that curious gesture, the derelict gave no other indication to show that he was being followed, followed by a dark-faced individual in a green velour hat, brogues of shiny cordovan, low-cut vest, with its staring segment of vivid silk shirt, with a cravat to match it.

They met at the entrance to the park, the dark-faced man speaking from the corner of his mouth in the prison twist:

"Yeah, fella; how much, ha?"

"Shoot me a couple of decks—quick!" came the mumbled answer. "An' here's th' jack."

Something passed from hand to hand with the speed of light; with the white powders in his pocket the nondescript was turning away, when of a sudden he wheeled, eyes glinting on either side of his high-arched, broken nose.

"I'll be needin' a pokeful, fella—see?" His voice came in a harsh whisper. Now——"

The dark-faced man glanced swiftly to right and left. He did not appear to speak. but as he passed the derelict words came, as if out of the air, in a hissing sibilance:

"Looie's—West Tenth—to-night—eleven. I'll be lookin' f'r you."

They separated, the derelict walking across the park, with its nurse-maids, perambulators, dreaming in the hot afternoon sun. But once clear of that oasis in the city's turmoil, the trampish man straightened. Humming a little tune, he passed swiftly within the shadow of an alley at his right, his slouching shuffle changing to the free-striding, cat-like step of an athlete always in training.

But his face beneath that battered felt hat was lupine, predatory—the face of a criminal, the face of Denver Ed Masterman, crook and the companion of crooks. And if you doubted it, there was the high-arched, broken nose; Denver had gotten that at Looie's in a "jam" in which Gregory Vinson had figured, and with him Stephen O'Hare, and it had been Vinson's nightstick that had done it.

But Denver Ed had done his bit; they had sent him to stir for a stretch that even now would have had some time to run but for the shortening of his sentence for "good behavior." And that was the reason, doubtless, for his abrupt appearance in that crowded thoroughfare.

That Masterman was a cokie, a "burnee snuffer," a snifter was well known. The dark-faced man had known of it, even without that brief, scarcely perceptible signal. And it had been suspected also, but never proven, that Masterman had been a stool, an informer. Perhaps this may have had something to do with the shortening of his sentence.

Now, passing within the shadow of that alley, the man who was Denver Ed Masterman abruptly disappeared, as a stone sinks into the silence and darkness of a midnight pool. But hard upon the hour of eleven a man with a high-arched, broken nose beneath a shapeless felt hat slunk into a telephone booth in an obscure pharmacy at the corner of Greenwich and West Tenth. Half-way down the block was Looie's. Calling a number, Denver Ed spoke briefly and rapidly into the transmitter. But now his speech was crisp, incisive, devoid of that snarling idiom which is the hall-mark of crooks:

"West Tenth—yes—Looie's—eleven. It's getting warm—yes—good-by."

It was a warm, humid evening, but Denver Ed's reference did not concern the weather. Now, soundless and swift, he was in the street, walking with his soft, gliding

shuffle until opposite the black maw of a hallway, where, down a long tunnel of gloom, there glowed a single crimson gleam, like an inflamed and angry eye.

But Masterman did not hesitate. Walking toward that light, his peculiar double rap was answered by the grating of a bolt; a flashlight's beam struck him between the eyes as he heard the snarling whisper:

"Good! Denver Ed—ha? You guns, now, here's Denver Ed!"

But it was not good for Denver Ed Masterman. A hand reached forth, the fingers claw-like, malformed; he was jerked inward, the door slammed shut behind him with a muffled crash. He blinked, scowling, as he faced a ring of savage faces, guns out, and he backed instinctively against the wall. He heard the growling chorus:

"Well, we got 'im! Croak 'im now, th' damn stool!"

And then of a sudden, above the savage oaths, there came a voice. It was thin, like steel, or as a razor is thin, with a black, cutting edge:

"Well, well, Denver Ed Masterman, you thought you could get away with it—ha? Well, you can't. We have ways of finding out, and we have ways of dealing with those who know too much and sell that knowledge for a price."

The eyes on either side of that high-arched, broken nose nearly closed, but not from fear. At the sound of that voice they narrowed, in their depths a hot, avid spark. It was the fighting flame, if they had but known it, of Gregory Vinson, sergeant of detectives.

For Denver Ed Masterman was up the river; Vinson, disguised to look like him, stood in his place. A master of make-up, the detective had found it a comparatively easy matter to impersonate the absent Masterman, and he had succeeded only too well. Now he stood his ground, and it was a tight place, a desperate close corner, if what he read in the eyes of the tall man who faced him now, hedged round with steel, could be believed. In a moment it would be over, with the thunder of the guns, in that chamber below the street.

And it was the one thing upon which he had not counted, yet he listened now with all his ears to the slow, biting syllables, dripping venom and hate unutterable:

"Masterman, you got time off to find O'Hare—ha? Well, where you're going you'll have plenty of time, years of it. Because we're going to give you what we gave that damn dick, and you'll pray for death before we're through, and *we won't give it to you! Now!*"

His hand, holding his gun, butt foremost, came upward with the speed of light. It crashed downward toward Vinson's head.

---

## CHAPTER FOUR

IN the infinitesimal split-second that the detective saw it coming, he ducked, lunging forward on the balls of his feet, as a boxer lunges, his fist crashing full upon the tall man's jaw. Then followed a mêlée of fist and foot, blow and counter-blow. A gun crashed, the flash of the discharge searing his eyeballs; a knife flew, quivering, a hand's-breadth from his cheek, driving into the plaster with a muffled clang.

For a moment there was a lull, a breathless pause. Vinson, his back against the door, sought mostly to protect that made-up, high-arched, broken nose. A chance blow and he would be discovered; they would know whom they fought.

Circling, ducking, feinting, by some miracle of skill he was so far holding his own, his attackers impeded by very weight of numbers. But flesh and blood could not long endure it. There was a dark-faced man in front of him. Vinson, out of the tail of his eye, had seen him as the tide of the attack swept down upon him with gun, knife, and fist. Now, in the twinkling of an eye, the dark man's foot flashed up and out—the bone-breaking kick of La Savate.

There is but one answer to that terrific attack, one parry. Vinson's hand, reaching, closed on the fellow's ankle; there followed a quick heave, a grunt, and his adversary catapulted backward into the mass.

Men went down like ten-pins before that human battering-ram as Vinson, his hand

behind him, found the door. A quick twist and the door flew open even as a face rose, grinning, out of the press, long dirk in a hairy fist leveled at his heart.

Vinson dodged, twisted; the knife found empty air; then, stiff-arming the arm, as a football player goes through a broken field, he was into and through the doorway at a plunging rush.

But as he raced down that narrow hallway to the street he was remembering a face that he had seen back there in that stronghold of the wolves—a white face, like the face of a man who moves in darkness, like a rat, furtive and evil. And, as he recalled it, on that last day on which he had seen O'Hare he had seen that face peering from the shadows like a thing of evil, slinking and sly.

Eddie the Mouse—that was his "moniker," the detective remembered as, once in the street, he made the corner at a loping trot. He was safe. And that night Denver Ed Masterman dropped out of sight as though the earth had opened and swallowed him. Vinson had drawn a blank, and yet not altogether. With the coming of the next morning's sun he sought that little park and the nursemaids and their charges feeding the nomad birds. As he sat musing, his hat drawn downward over his half-closed eyes, a figure, coming out of nowhere, passed him with a dragging shuffle—Eddie the Mouse.

It was not chance that had brought the Mouse here on this bright summer morning. Vinson knew that for that one hour out of the twenty-four the dweller by night would leave his lair, crossing the park on an errand which Vinson had of late suspected, but had never been able to prove.

And if that errand should lead to O'Hare?

The detective waited, nerves tense, as the gangling figure passed onward. He knew that the Mouse was a sort of handy man for that tall leader with the voice of ice—the renegade who he was now convinced had been the brain behind the disappearance of O'Hare. He rose now, leisurely and slow, idling after that distant figure, weaving its slow way among the traffic just beyond.

Vinson, attired in the regulation black shirt, loose trousers and soft, shapeless hat of a park habitué, followed now with his swift, silent step, hat pulled low over his forehead. He had gone unshaven for the past three days, and he looked the part.

He could see the Mouse just ahead, head bent, feet dragging on the asphalt. He looked again, quickening his pace. His quarry had vanished!

For a moment the detective stood, his gaze narrowed upon that congested thoroughfare, above it the loom of the "L" tracks, warehouses on either hand and small shops. He had lost the Mouse!

And then he saw an alley, little better than a mews, glimmering darkly at his right. Even by day it was dark in that alley; to eyes unaccustomed to the gloom it would be a midnight blackness, even at high noon. The Mouse had not been more than a half block in the lead, Vinson remembered; he turned now, plunging into the darkness of that alley at a swinging walk.

And then, in the nick of time, he saw the shuffling figure, perhaps fifty feet in advance; he saw it even as it vanished before his eyes, as if into a fourth dimension of invisibility.

The detective could not see where his man had entered; it was a tenement, silent and dark even by day, and then in a flash he saw a low door, set in the wall, invisible save to eyes accustomed to the darkness; it was swinging now slowly in the windless air.

Listening, holding his breath, Vinson heard after a little the pattering of footsteps in the dimness, the striking of a match, a thick, tipsy laugh. Pushing open that door, he bent forward, straining his gaze against the gloom, groping his way among the litter of old cans and bottles.

The place had an unsavory reputation; murder had been done there; arson had lifted its ugly head, with the swift licking flame of the oil-fire rising to the charred and blackened roof. But the place had been rebuilt; it was a rookery of queer sights and sounds, smells and rustlings, even by day.

The Mouse was somewhere ahead; Vinson was certain of it, and at the same in-

stant that he was certain he felt a presence within a hand's-breadth of his face.

He put out a hand; it touched a sleazy collar; the hand tightened; there came a squeak, a glibber, a mewling like a great cat. Vinson's grip tightened as from the whispering dark there arose a sudden murmur. The cohorts of the damned closed around him with the silent onrush of their shadowy figures from right to left.

"The blind beggars!" muttered Vinson. "I might have known!"

For in this underground warren, as he remembered now, there abode a strange crew in a stranger fellowship: beggars and sightless all, blind men who sought the dark. And now, as his hand tightened about that collar, they shouldered him, pushing against him without a sound.

But Vinson, in turn shouldering them aside without ceremony, turned the bright beam of his flash upon the cringing figure under his hand. The blind men fell away. The Mouse, for it was he, cringed, lifting an elbow against his face.

"Lemme go!" he whined. "Lemme go, do you hear!" And then the ancient plaint of the cornered jungle-rat: "I—I ain't done nothin'; y' ain't got nothin' on *me*, mister, honest t' Gawd!"

The detective shook him slowly from right to left, and now his voice held a grating edge:

"Eddie, come clean; do you hear me? Now where is"—his voice fell to a hissing whisper—"where is O'Hare?"

The Mouse trembled; Vinson could feel him shaking under his hand.

"I dunno, mister," he said at length. "You better ask—you better ask——"

Vinson's grip tightened to a bruising violence.

"You come clean now; it's your last chance, for you know something. And if you won't—well, it's over the road for yours, Mouse, *and there'll be no coming back!*"

For a moment, following his words, it seemed to Vinson that there was another presence, there at his back. Of a sudden he had felt a cold wind blowing against the back of his neck, as if a door had been opened and shut somewhere. And then, as suddenly, Eddie the Mouse began to speak, slowly, haltingly, sheer terror evident in the thin whisper:

"I'll tell you, mister."

Vinson's heart leaped; after all, he had expected nothing so good as this. It had been a shot in the dark, and it had told.

"I'll tell you, mister," went on the Mouse, for the moment his fear of the law greater even than his fear of consequences. "You know that alley just beyond West Tenth? Well, you follow that alley, mister"—his voice sank to a murmur—"an' you'll find th' house. It's boarded up in front, see? Th' Big Gun owns it, only it ain't in the alley, it's the third."

There came a streak of flame out of the dark, the grunting cough of a silencer, the thud-d as a slug went home. Eddie the Mouse, collapsing like an empty bag, sagged heavily against Vinson's shoulder. Dead, with the secret on his lips, he had passed on.

Vinson, lowering the body gently to the flooring, emptied his automatic into the thick-piled shadows. Then he waited, tense, but silence answered him, only silence, and the slow drip-drip of the moisture from the mouldering walls, like the slow ebbing of a life.

He rose, crouching, above the body of the man who had been killed, taking his secret with him to the grave. And as he went forward from that place of death he thought that he heard behind him, faint and far, the echo of a taunting laugh.

---

## CHAPTER FIVE

EDDIE the Mouse was dead, and his secret with him.

"It's the third," he had said, even as the killer's bullet had found him, in that chamber of death beyond the alley. But whether it was the third house or the third block, Vinson could not be certain. The neighborhood was a network of alleys and mean streets. They turned and doubled in a crooked and devious trail, north and south

and east and west. And all that the detective knew was that there was a house boarded up in front, that it was not in the alley, the alley of the Blind Beggars, but it was somewhere in the neighborhood.

He believed now that Stephen O'Hare was alive, and he would find him, by hook or crook. But time pressed.

Pondering these things as he walked northward along the broad avenue to the westward, he wheeled abruptly at a low voice at his elbow:

"Oh, sergeant," came the voice. "It is I—Julo. Just a moment."

The words, the tone, were unusual in that neighborhood, but Vinson knew them upon the instant. Now he turned to confront the dark, foreign face of Julo, the Apache, as he was called. There had been a story, Vinson could not recall the details, of an enmity between the Frenchman and the Big Gun—the leader of the crooks. He remembered something of it now as he glanced into the dark face raised to his—the Big Gun, the renegade with the voice of ice and the heart of a cobra.

"Sergeant"—the words came in a thin whisper—"Detective O'Hare, he helped me once, and I have just a moment to tell you that it was the Big Gun who killed Eddie the Mouse. I know. And although I do not know where they have hidden my friend, I have been searching. I will find out, and when I do I will tell you; I will let you know."

Vinson nodded, stretching forth his hand, but the man had gone, melting into the traffic at the corner of the street. The detective's way lay now to the place where he had last seen, talked with the missing O'Hare, and that was but three blocks northward from the alley of the beggars. From that point he would begin his search.

Evening was coming on, and as Vinson crossed the street he noticed idly that there was a taxi at the curb, its engine running, the driver at the wheel. It was with no particular thought of danger that the detective, dressed still in that shapeless suit and battered hat, went on across the cobbles, halting a moment in the shadow of a tall warehouse just across.

But it was a chancy neighborhood, even by day. On this very spot, as he remembered, Murtagh, the promising young policeman from the Fourth Ward, had been killed on his first beat, and there had been others.

As he stood there, pondering his next move, he noticed idly that his shoelace had come untied; he bent to fix it. By that movement he saved his life.

There was the sound of a gun. With the crash of the report he felt the wind of the bullet in his hair; his battered headgear whirled to the roadway as, pivoting on the balls of his feet, his keen gaze bored into the shadows.

But following the shot there was merely the echoing, long roar of a passing "L" train. Evidently the gunman, whoever he was, had waited for it. Vinson did not attempt pursuit.

But he decided on the instant to postpone his search. He was, as it happened, out of cartridges. Anyway, he would consult with Haggerty; it was time that he was making a report.

He bent, retrieving his hat from the cobbles, crooking a finger at the taxi-driver, who all this while had sat like a graven image at his wheel. And that was a trifle strange, if Vinson had considered it. But he did not.

He entered that battered taxi with a curious sense of crisis. The face of that driver—he had seen it somewhere before; it was a dark Italian face with high cheek-bones and a straight, cruel mouth, like a wedge, between lean cheeks scarred and scabbed with late-healed cicatrices and pocked blue with powder burns.

Not an inviting face. And the taxi was old. Glancing at the cushions, as they had roared past an arc-light at the corner of the street, Vinson had thought to see the dingy leather sewn thick with stains, broad patches, as if marked by crime.

But Gregory Vinson's was a trained imagination; he wasted little time in fancies, in speculations. He smiled grimly now in the dark recesses of the cab as he considered that in Julo, at any rate, he could count upon an ally, moved as much by

hatred as by love, and that there was no love lost between the "Apache" and that white-faced devil known only as the "Big Gun."

The detective, for reasons of his own, had given the driver a number in the West Nineties that was a few doors from Haggerty's house, and knew that at this hour of the day the inspector would be almost certain to be at home. But now, glancing from the window, his eyes narrowed with a sudden, swift concern as they rested on a window.

"The devil!" he ejaculated under his breath. "Now if I thought——"

But the sentence was never completed. They were in a narrow, unfamiliar street, a street silent, tenantless, as it seemed, save for dark doorways and here and there a furtive, drifting shadow shape.

The echoing roar of the engine beat in a swift clamor, and suddenly, with a sort of click, Vinson remembered where it was he had seen that wolfish countenance, the dark face of his driver separated from him by the width of a single pane of glass.

It had been behind glass that he had seen it, but that had been a long time past in the Gallery of Rogues that he had marked that face, its features, and he had remembered it when it was too late.

Well, the fellow had his nerve with him, at any rate: kidnapping an officer of the law in the performance of his duty. If Vinson had not been so intent upon the grim business in hand he might have found time to see the humor of it. But it was no place for humor.

His right hand falling upon the butt of his blunt-nosed automatic, with his left he jerked strongly at the handle of the door. But the door was locked; he could not open it.

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## CHAPTER SIX

VINSON had been in a tight place more than once; danger he knew as a twin brother knows his double. It had been with him in broad daylight, in darkness, grinning at his elbow with dirk or pistol in the highways and by-ways of Criminopolis. He was a fighter or he would never have won the position which he now held in the department.

His mouth a grim line, he was reaching with the butt of his automatic to break that glass when, with a grinding of brakes, the taxi whirled suddenly to a groaning halt.

The door swung open to the windy night without and the glimmer of a dark face at the curb.

"Here you are, sir." Vinson heard the voice with a mocking quality in the quasi-deferential cadence. But he could see merely the face, behind it a black well of darkness, save for the dim loom of a lofty building just across.

The detective did not know how many there might be lurking there in the blackness, nor did he greatly care. The locked door, the face of the man at the wheel, the unfamiliar street (and Vinson had thought that he had known his New York), and he was shanghaied by a land pirate.

But it was no time for hesitation. The officer was conscious of a swift, sudden anger. But it was an anger that was controlled as a flame is controlled, but it was none the less deadly for all that.

"Here you are, sir," repeated the voice, and now there was in it a something more than mockery; there was an edge, a rasp; almost it sounded like a command.

Vinson grinned, a mere facial contraction of the lips. Then, muscle and mind and body in one furious projectile, he launched himself outward through the doorway in a diving tackle.

The white face with its sneering grin was blotted out. There came the spank of a clean-cut blow, a turgid oath. Vinson, rising from his knees, surveyed the limp figure on the cobbles with a twisted smile; then he turned, peering under his hand down a long tunnel of gloom, where, at the far end, a light showed, like a will-o-the-wisp, beckoning him on.

He was somewhere in the Forties, he judged—Hell's Kitchen probably, although there was a curious lack of the life and movement in that grim neighborhood of battle, murder, and sudden death.

But as his eyes became accustomed to the dark he found the reason; it was a street of warehouses, public stores; farther on, as he looked, like a ribbon of pale flame against the violet sky, he saw the reflection of the river.

He bent his steps away from it, walking carefully, picking his way on the uneven flagging. Twice, as he went forward, it seemed to him that he was watched, that eyes gazed at him out of the blackness. Twice he turned his head, pivoting swiftly to face the silence and the emptiness of the long, lonely way.

And it seemed, too, that as he went the whispering echo of his hasty steps went on before him and behind; he fell to counting them, and suddenly he knew. The footsteps were before him and behind. He was in a trap.

There came a leaping, thunderous rush at his back, and a voice, screaming between the high walls:

"There he is! Now, go get 'im!"

The detective braced, spreading his arms wide as a grizzly meets the onslaught of wolves. But the wolves were many. They came on now, a ravening pack; one, before the rest, looming as a black pivot against the starshine, lunged forward with a growling oath.

The rest were yet some little distance away. It was evident by the way he was being followed that these crooks knew he was after them. Vinson saw the man, or rather he sensed the nearness of that leaping shadow spread-eagled like a bat against the dimness. Then there came the sodden impact of fist on flesh, a straining heave; Vinson, diving under the hurtling figure, straightened, hurled him outward and away.

The flying figure struck among the rest, head on, to a growling chorus of oaths and imprecations. But still they came on, thrusting, lunging; a gun crashed almost in Vinson's face. There came a voice:

"No shooting, you fool!"

The rest was lost as the pistol clattered to the ground. The centre of a whirling tangle of fists and feet, to Vinson it seemed that he fought in a nightmare that would have no end. He had gone to one knee under the impact of a swinging blow.

Something gripped his ankle, something at once soft and hard. He lunged, full length, as a football player at the last, desperate urge of his spent strength. Then he was on his feet, running, side-stepping, circling, with the skill and desperate effort of a plunging half-back, stiff-arming the opposition to the right and left.

Just ahead the black maw of an alley loomed. In its heart, like a witch-fire, there swam upward a nebulous, faint glow as from the Pit.

He reached the turn and a figure uprose before him, brutish, broad, thewed like a grizzly. The great arm rose, once; it fell, like the hammer of Thor. Vinson lurched, stiffened, buckling inward at the knees in a loose-jointed, slumping fall.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

THE detective came to himself, all his faculties at full tide. His head ached a trifle where the fall had bruised it; otherwise he seemed unhurt. And it was then that, stretching his arms in relief to find that he was was free, he made one halting step. Then he was flung against the wall, pulled backward as if in the grasp of a gigantic hand.

By the dim flare of a single gas-jet he saw that he was not bound, but riveted, rather, to that wall—a great belt of iron about his middle, with a chain running from it. The chain gave him a little freedom, just enough to take a step or two, and that was all. And then, glancing downward at the stones, his stoic hardihood suffered a shock.

For there, side by side in a gruesome fellowship, there hung a skeleton, and about its middle there ran an iron band, the same as Vinson's. The inference was obvious: there he would rot until he, too, had passed onward, even as had that which, at his side, had at one time been a man.

Gazing at that skeleton, the detective, eyes closed to slits, smothered a quick word on his lips. For upon the little finger there

was a ring, with a peculiar device—a device well known to Vinson—and that ring had been Stephen O'Hare's!

The officer groaned, and it seemed that the groan was echoed in that vaulted charnel beneath the street.

"Dead—my God!" he muttered. "He's dead—poor Steve is dead!"

It was all over. There was no use in trying any longer. Steve was dead. But even with the words there came a ghostly echo in a faint, hissing whisper:

"He is not dead—but sleepeth!"

Vinson stiffened as the tall figure came forward under the light. It was the Big Gun and he smiled, and in that smile was death for Gregory Vinson. When a man steps downward from his high estate he becomes indeed a pariah, a thing accursed—and the Big Gun was a renegade from honor and a high place and all that to most men would have been beyond price. Now, with a bitter sneer, again there came the words, in a biting irony:

"He is not dead, but sleepeth as you shall sleep, my friend!"

The thin lips curled, the haunted eyes glowed, as if lighted from within; the man with the voice of ice and the heart of a cobra bowed low, with an infinite mockery, then he was gone.

And with his going Vinson felt that chain move, swaying. There came a brief tug, a rat, doubtless, forerunner of that which was to come. But even with the thought he heard the whisper:

"Sergeant—steady!"

It was Julo, the Apache.

"I'll have you loose in a moment, *mon ami,*" continued the voice. "Just a moment now. I've phoned for the reserves."

The rasp of a file rose in the silence. Vinson waited; and as he waited it seemed to him that he could detect an odor, an acrid, faint tang rising out of the murk. It thickened into smoke! He knew what it was now.

The fiend who had but just now left him had fired the building, leaving him to die like a rat in a trap. The smoke grew thicker, billowing in heavy clouds, and through the clouds there showed for a moment a brief, licking flame, like a hungry tongue.

The last link fell away as Julo's voice sounded:

"Now for Room 13; and hurry, my friend. It is on the floor above, facing on the alley."

Vinson did not pause to reason, to ask. He knew only that in some mysterious fashion he had at last found that which he sought. At a plunging run he cleared the stairs, the smoke rising now in increasing volume. Pistol in hand, he gained a narrow hall.

None sought to stay his progress as with great strides he went up the stairs, along that narrow corridor. There were the numbers—9, 11, 13! And there was that dingy fanlight, and just within—what?

Vinson, despite the desperate urge of his need, paused a split-second, his heart beating thickly in his breast, hammering beneath his ribs, as, with a quick gesture he flung wide the door.

But what he had hoped, dreaded, feared to see was as nothing to the sight which met his gaze in that dingy prison without bars.

There came a wailing from the bed, and a face uprose to meet him. The man made an inarticulate babble in his throat as Vinson, his face gray, gave backward one halting step.

The vengeance—the living death! Verily had it been consummated! That skeleton, artfully planted at his side back there in the cellar, the ring, the hope so artfully fed to him of what he might find—surely, Satan himself could not have gone further.

And Stephen O'Hare, with his fine, upstanding youth, confident, assured—and now—this.

It was too much. Vinson, fire-tried and tested in the crucible of adventure, his courage fused to chilled steel in the white-hot alembic of action, fell back weakly against the door-casing.

That it should come to this!

The fire, roaring beneath them, was mounting upward. A stairway fell with a crash and there came a great burst of flame. From the distance, nearer now, came the roar and rattle of the patrol

And then his heart gave one great upward leap. From there had come a voice, faint and far away, muffled as through many thicknesses of walls:

*"Greg!"*

That voice! Vinson would have known it among a thousand. A rush, and he was at a closet in the wall. He gave it a battering wrench, and the great door crashed outward almost in his face.

And there in the opening, pale but whole, stood Stephen O'Hare.

Then the other man in the bed was not the missing detective.

But it was no time for talk. A wrenching handclasp, and then together they had lifted the poor wreck from the bed, had run up the window, and were on the fire-escape. That roaring furnace mounted higher now. They had gone down, step by careful step. A burst of cheering from below greeted them as, with the crashing of the walls of the building, they, with their burden, sprang clear of danger.

The stronghold of the wolves was a stronghold no longer.

As a man returned from the grave, Stephen O'Hare faced Gregory Vinson and Inspector Haggerty in the latter's private sanctum.

"Well, the Big Gun passed out in the fire—caught in his own trap—we know that, Steve," Haggerty was saying. "But tell us—you had three years of it, man! It must have been hell!"

Detective O'Hare grinned—a twisted grimace.

"It was that, and then some, Inspector," he made answer. "It's a wonder, and a blessing, too, that I'm not insane because of it."

He paused. Vinson spoke:

"And do you mean to tell us that that devil kept you chained to that staple in the cellar for three years?"

O'Hare smiled wearily; then he said, his eyes closed, as if in remembrance:

"Much of the time he did. He was an expert torturer."

He lifted his hands, palms outward, and across and across they were seamed and scarred, twisted and disfigured.

"The whole of it would make quite a story. You'll hear it some time, but not now," O'Hare continued quietly. "Julo knew, and so did the Mouse. And I think you'd have shared it with me, Greg, but for Julo. That gibbering wreck you found was a cop who offended the Big Gun. One year on the chain did that for him."

He paused. The two who listened looked at each other and away. Vinson spoke, solemnly, from a full heart:

"You're back, boy, and that's all that matters."

The secret of Room 13 was a secret no longer.

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## NEW THIEVERY

D. C. REYNOLDS of Black Ash, Pa., has discovered how his milk was being stolen, disclosing something new here in thievery. On his farm are two cows, each producing a large quantity of excellent milk. Recently the production took a sudden drop, and Reynolds was mystified as to the cause.

Deciding to keep watch and try to catch the thief, Reynolds slept in the barn several nights. No intruder appeared, and Reynolds was disposed to conclude the cows were falling down on their job.

Mrs. Reynolds refused to accept that theory and took a hand in the detective work herself. She maintained her vigil in the daytime as well as at night. Quietly entering the inclosure where the cows are kept, she was startled the other day at the sight of a big blacksnake coiled underneath one of the animals, sucking milk, without any show of uneasiness on the cow's part. She was about to get her husband when a second snake applied its mouth to the udder of the other cow.

Reynolds killed both snakes. One was seven feet long, the other five.

# The Lure of a Kiss

by Jack Bechdolt

THE first thing Barney Leech ever stole was neckties — flamboyant, striped neckties displayed on a pushcart. He was then a slim, insignificant, undersized adolescent with the face of an angel and the nerve of the devil. He stole neckties to feed his soul.

As Barney grew older his tastes became more particular. He looted men's furnishing stores where neckties are known as cravats. Later he found it simpler to steal money or easily converted jewelry and buy his clothes where he pleased.

Clothes had a strange effect on Barney Leech. Before he was old enough to steal anything his mother, a harassed mother of a large, poverty-stricken family, discovered that Barney dressed in a starched white blouse, Sunday shoes and Sunday necktie was a veritable Mr. Hyde, whereas Barney in his soiled, ragged every-day knickers, torn stockings, runover shoes and no necktie at all was the incarnation of Doctor Jekyll.

When he became a successful crook Barney ordered a dozen new suits a year from one of the best tailors in New York. He read the magazines that tell what well-dressed men are wearing, studied the photographs of society folk in their various activities and spent his spare time on the avenue or about the lounges of big hotels, observing. A thief of most exemplary habits, he had his one weakness, as we all do. He lived simply and without feminine entanglements. He avoided the acquaintance of fellow thieves. He never drank anything alcoholic. But he could get drunk as a lord with importance on full evening dress and a ticket to the opera-house, where he rubbed shoulders with the well-dressed idlers of the moneyed world. It was not snobbery or desire for undeserved social recognition. It was a hobby, a passion, like collecting rare first editions.

For business purposes Barney affected a plain tweed sack suit of indeterminate, neutral hue, and neither too new nor too old to attract attention. An inconspicuous soft hat covered his head. He never wore jewelry. His appearance escaped notice and defied accurate description. Dressed in this wise—the equivalent of blue denim overalls and a tin dinner pail to the laboring man—Barney was all business, a hard-boiled crook and none sharper in his line. Apartments and duplex flats opened their doors at his magic persuasion, wall safes yielded their secrets. His sharp, rather long nose had an uncanny faculty for smelling a

brooch or necklace, convertible bond or banknote in every hiding-place known to human ingenuity. In working garb Barney Leech was sharp as the sharpest and wise as the wisest. He seldom picked a non-paying venture. Nobody could impose on his credulity.

Decked out in his soup-and-fish, a strange transformation came over Barney. His manner was easier, more gracious. His speech lost its peculiar Ninth avenue tang. He grew into a slender, slightly undersized, handsome black-haired young gentleman with coal-black eyes and pallid skin, charming of manner, democratically friendly. In evening dress he had been known to help old ladies across crowded streets, to give up his seat to women in the subway, even to drop coins in the cups of professional blind men.

Once, while on one of these sartorial sprees, he so far forgot himself that when a jeweled dowager dropped a necklace in the foyer of a theatre he picked it up and returned it to her with a low bow. He might as easily have kept the bauble and sold it to a fence. But he was drunk on clothes, drunk as a lord. Dressed like a gentleman, he felt impelled to act like a gentleman. Fine feathers made a fine fool of Barney Leech.

Hamilton Rook, the notorious Hamilton Rook of divorce court and midnight roof fame, was entertaining week-end guests in his Long Island country home. In a few moments dinner would be served and the guests had dressed and assembled on the ground floor of the Georgian mansion. It was the charmed hour when prowlers prowl and safes give up their secrets.

Barney Leech in dinner jacket, spotless linen, bareheaded, strolled with splendid nonchalance down a corridor of the east wing of Rook's mansion, the wing where the richest of the guests were lodged.

Although he had materialized out of the night by way of a vine, a balcony and an open French window, Barney was unruffled. Had there been anybody present to observe him, which there was not, they would have seen nothing in his manner to suggest that he was anything but a guest intent upon some casual errand and perfectly familiar with his surroundings.

Barney was familiar with his surroundings. He had studied the plans of Hamilton Rook's home printed in a descriptive article in *American Country Life* until he knew his way by rote.

He was not in the least nervous. His preliminary observation from the shadowed lawns assured him there was little chance of interruption at this hour. Even if he met some stray guest or servant he would not mind much. The party was a large one and strange faces were not unusual in Rook's home.

Barney Leech very much fancied himself in his faultless dinner dress, fresh from his Madison avenue tailor. He had never tried this sort of thing before—pleasure with business—and the clothes gave him a wonderful assurance. He thought whimsically that it might be an excellent idea after finishing his errand among these guest rooms to mingle with Rook's well-dressed friends for a half-hour or so—perhaps chat with some of the people whose names he read in society columns before he strolled away from the house.

Certain that he was not watched, Barney tried a door and found it unlocked. He stepped noiselessly into a room and closed the door behind him. He had entered a suite, reception-room, bedroom and bath. The little reception-room in which he stood was dark. A subdued light glowed from the bedroom.

Barney moved stealthily toward the bedroom doorway, the thick carpet underfoot helping him immensely. Flattening his back against the wall, he peeped beyond the door.

At first he thought the room was empty. He was about to move farther in his explorations when a low, muffled sound caused him to fade again into the shadow. The sound was repeated. A woman was sobbing.

Tingling with excitement, Barney began to move step by step toward the outer door. The sobbing was repeated. A woman was in grief, desperate grief, judging by the racking, terrible noise she tried to stifle.

Barney Leech, about to let himself into the corridor, again stopped short. Warned of something unusual by the sharp intake of the weeper's breath, a fearful gasp of ultimate tragedy, he glanced into the bedroom again, and sprang toward its door.

He burst into the inner room with a rush, in time to snatch the woman's wrist and deflect the pistol barrel which she had placed at her temple.

They struggled without a word, with scarcely a sound save their quick breathing —the crook and a strikingly beautiful, red-haired young woman in glittering evening dress. Barney's strong fingers dug into the soft muscles of her wrist, wrenched the cords savagely. With a sharp wince at the pain of it she dropped the pistol.

Barney released her arms, recovered the weapon from the rug and, stepping to the open window, tossed it into the night. "That's no way for a beautiful lady to do," he reproved her gently, in his very best manner.

The woman had watched him, shrinking away, her gray eyes opened very wide, her lips trembling. Barney saw that she was a real beauty. She was not only beautiful, but had that patrician manner, that poise, that made her one woman in a million. She covered her face with her hands and began to sob. Barney Leech led her gently to a deep chair and forced her to sit down. He stepped into the adjoining bathroom and returned with a glass of water, making her drink a little. "Things are never quite so bad as they seem," he smiled reassuringly. "And if you really must do it try some other way. A gun makes such a mess!"

Barney's first aid to would-be suicides began to take effect. As he argued, lightly, whimsically, humorously, the young woman quieted. He began to notice how very lovely she was. The way she listened humbly to all that he said and responded to his sensible advice did not escape Barney's notice either. There was something childlike and deliciously flattering in the impulsive way she caught his sleeve in her fingers and told him: "You've been so patient and awfully good to me!" She smiled, though her eyes were still wet with tears.

"It's all right now? You promise not to do—anything—rash?"

She shook uncontrollably. "I don't know what to do! There isn't any other way but that."

Said Barney, playing up to his dinner jacket: "Look here, maybe I can help you. I want to help you!"

The forlorn lady looked at him steadily with a new interest. A slight frown of puzzlement creased her smooth brow. "Who are you? I—I don't remember meeting you."

"No," said Barney, "you didn't. I'm not a guest. I am"—he almost said what he was, but the caution of his dangerous profession suggested a better story—"I'm only a private detective," he finished humbly. "Mr. Rook employs me to watch things when he has a party like this. But if I could help you—you see, being a stranger, and not likely to meet you again, you could place confidence in me."

The suggestion frightened her. She shook her head rapidly. "Why did you come?" she moaned. "If you had only let me alone I—it would all be settled now!"

She sprang up, her eyes wild. Barney was obliged to catch her in his arms and force her back into the chair. Holding her so close to him for a moment or perhaps two, he was not unaware of her fragrance, her delicious, soft warmth.

"Now see here," he said sternly, "tell me your troubles. I'll find a way to help you out. That's my business."

"I'm going to trust you," she decided with a rainbow smile. "Why not? I'm ruined, anyway. I can't lose anything. And if you could help me. If you would!"

She rose hurriedly and picked up a jewel case from the dressing-table. Out of it she tumbled various shining trinkets: brooches, hair ornaments, earrings, a rope of pearls, a handful of rings. Barney Leech saw with a professional eye that the box contained a small fortune in gewgaws. "You can have anything you want—all of them—if you save me," she whispered breathlessly. "I'll pay, I'll pay well!"

Barney Leech reddened. "I didn't ask you to pay me," he said sulkily.

"But, don't you see, I must! I couldn't stay under an obligation like that to a—to a stranger, Mr.—I don't even know your name!"

He told her his name, his real name. "Now you'd better explain your troubles," he suggested. "We're wasting a lot of time."

There was a mental struggle evident before she began, speaking rapidly in a confidential murmur that brought their heads close together. "I am Mrs. Price Addington; I don't suppose you ever heard of us?" Barney shook his head. "We're strangers in the East, comparative strangers. My husband made his fortune in the Pacific Northwest. We were married there, and our home is there. It is our first visit to New York. I wish we had never come!"

Again the mental struggle. "Please don't waste time," Barney urged.

"I'll have to tell you about myself then—my secret. You know Rook? You can't work for him and be a detective without knowing the sort of man he is!"

"I understand the kind he is, all right!"

She nodded understandingly. "I said this was our first visit in the East. It is my husband's first visit among people like this. He made his money in the last five years. But six years ago I was in New York. A silly girl, stage-struck, just like a million girls who come from the little towns expecting to make their fortunes! It took me six months to learn there wasn't a chance for me singing the big rôles I thought I could do. I wasn't even trained for the chorus, and the one chance I had at a position was a man's offer—an offer I would not accept. His terms were too dear; I ran out of money. I was hungry, desperate. I began looking for work, any kind of work, and I found it as an artist's model. Do you know Bruce, the sculptor? But of course you have heard of him! As bad as Hamilton Rook, worse where women are concerned! They warned me, other models did, that no woman could pose for Bruce and remain decent. After the Daisy Howard shooting the man's reputation has been worldwide, but he is a genius! His work is in every great museum. Foreign governments keep him busy with big commissions. But any woman who poses for Bruce is marked. Well, I posed for Bruce. I posed for Bruce becase I needed the work to keep body and soul together. I posed for Bruce and remained a good woman. Do you believe that?" Mrs. Price Addington laughed harshly. "What man would!" she exclaimed bitterly.

"I do," Barney said gravely.

"It doesn't matter. Most men would not. My husband would not believe it. If he knew that—you see I love my husband. I can't help it, I love him!"

Barney Leech nodded, beginning to understand.

"Bruce made a little figure of me, a lovely little bronze nude. He paid me and I never saw him again—nor the figure. That figure was bought by Hamilton Rook. Rook has it here in this house. He showed it to me this afternoon. There is no mistaking it. No mistaking the likeness! It is I, done in bronze with all Bruce's devilish genius!"

"I think I can guess the rest," Barney said, anxious to spare her pain. "Rook is in love with you?"

"Yes."

"He's trying to blackmail you, offering the secret for your consent?"

"Yes."

"And if you don't consent he means to make your husband a present of this bronze statuette, and let him imagine the worst?"

Mrs. Price Addington nodded miserably.

"Your husband would be foolish enough to believe that about you!"

"My husband is a man! And a jealous man. How many men—or women—who knew I posed for Bruce would not believe that insinuation?"

Barney Leech considered slowly. He forgot why he was in Hamilton Rook's home. He forgot all the training of his arduous profession. Not even that time he took his pick of the Paige-Van Siclen wedding gifts from under the very noses of the six special police guarding them had he been thrilled like this. The greatest achievement of his career was flat compared to the present moment. Always before his motive had been personal gain—selfishness.

His present motive was a real novelty, Quixoticism, chivalry in its most alluring guise. Barney Leech was dramatizing his dinner jacket.

"Where does Rook keep this statuette?" he asked in his most business-like manner.

"Locked in the big wall safe in his own room off the library in the west wing. The safe is covered by the tapestry of the Rake's Progress. The room itself is kept locked. Mr. Leech, it would be impossible, even for you; nobody could do it."

Barney Leech considered rapidly. It was dangerous, more dangerous than he liked. To reach Rook's safe meant his unexplainable presence on the ground floor of the house, crowded with guests and servants. Even the Van Siclen job was tame compared to this! He didn't like it!

"Do you know that pergola down below the swimming pool?" he asked earnestly. "Slip out after dinner. I'll be waiting for you there. If I'm still alive and at liberty I'll have that statuette."

Mrs. Price Addington rose, and Barney rose with her. She picked up her jewel case again, snatching out a handful of fortunes at random, and thrust them toward him. Barney backed away hurriedly. "Please!" he urged, really hurt.

He walked to the corridor door, the woman beside him. "Don't worry," he whispered, opening the door on a crack and peeping out to make sure of a clear coast.

"Stop! Wait!" Her hand clutched his arm. "I can't ever pay you, or thank you, but——" Before Barney realized it two fragrant white arms circled his neck, his head was pulled lower and warm lips touched his lips.

Barney Leech waked next morning in his own snug little studio flat on a discreet side street of New York. His eyes turned at once to a bronze statuette that stood on the mantel, the dainty, nude figure of a woman, arms outstretched, hair streaming as she bent forward in flight. He stared at it with a frown of deepening perplexity.

"If that's her," he muttered, "her husband's got a keener eye for likeness than I have. So has Rook. I'd never guess it!"

Strange that Mrs. Price Addington had not kept their tryst at the pergola! Barney had waited hours, until the night grew unbearably chilly. As a consequence he felt rheumatic twinges even now. What circumstance had detained her? He imagined all manner of tragic happenings. Anyway, one thing was sure. Her secret was safe with him. A warm glow heartened him. Memory of the woman's beauty, recollection of her kiss made him happy. The night had been worth all that it cost him, though he never saw her again!

He ended his musing at last and went to his door for the morning paper that waited there. Bold headlines met Barney's eye:

HAMILTON ROOK'S GUESTS ROBBED AT DINNER HOUR

Long Island Home of Millionaire Scene of Daringly Bold Visitation During Week-end Gayety

Police Are Seeking a Woman

Barney read in rapid gulps. A complete clean-up! Jewels and trinkets worth a hundred thousand dollars gone! There hadn't been a haul so rich or so thorough in the past ten years. The work of a genius among criminals.

A paragraph caught his eyes as though printed in letters of fire:

Police detectives are working on a definite clue, and the net is out for one Tweenie Kelly, alias Ritzi, a famous woman jewel thief. Mr. Rook's servants have positively identified photographs of the Kelly woman as a visitor to the house last night, passing as one of Mr. Rook's guests. This is a favorite method of this queen of prowlers.

The newspaper printed a portrait of Tweenie Kelly, alias Ritzi. It was also an excellent likeness of the lovely Mrs. Price Addington. Barney Leech uttered a howl compounded of equal parts rage and grief, and crumpling the paper into a wad hurled it savagely from him. But a gruesome, morbid interest drew him back to the man-

gled news sheet to learn the full depths of his betrayal. He read again:

An inexplicable feature of the case is the breaking open of a wall safe in Mr. Rook's study on the ground floor of the house. The safe was known to all the servants, and because of that was not used for keeping valuables. It contained last night only some stored curios and mementoes of little intrinsic value. The one thing stolen from the safe is a bronze statuette of a nude woman. The little bronze can be duplicated in any art store for ten dollars. It was used for a time by Mr. Rook to ornament the radiator cap of his motor car.

Again Barney Leech hurled the crumpled newspaper to the floor and jumped on it. His hand caught the bronze figureine from the mantel and smashed it against the wall. Trampling the torn newspaper to shreds, kicking the statuette before him like a football, Barney raged up and down the length of his chamber, applying to himself and to Tweenie Kelly epithets which Sir Lancelot never dreamed of.

So that was it! She must have seen him enter the very room where she had come to rifle the jewel case. She took him in completely with her play-acting at suicide, her fantastic story about a villain and a jealous husband. He swallowed it all and let her get him out of the way, sending him on a fool's errand, while she finished looting the place at leisure!

Barney Leech flung himself flat on his bed, face down, writhing, tearing the sheets into rags in his madness at being taken in so handily by a female thief.

It was not until late that night when he had gone to a cabaret seeking forgetfulness that Barney smiled again. He smiled fondly at the memory of a woman's kiss. "Oh, well!" he sighed.

But when he achieved this moment of romantic retrospect Barney Leech was again wearing his dinner jacket.

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## THIEVES GET DIAMONDS WORTH $75,000

EFFORTS of the New York Police Department to suppress news of a daring diamond robbery failed recently, when it became known that $75,000 worth of unset gems had been stolen from the safe in the storeroom of the firm of Slnyter & Blitz, diamond cutters at 108 Fulton street. The robbery was one of the cleverest reported to the police in months.

Some time between Saturday noon and Monday morning experienced safe robbers gained entrance to the concern's loft, which is on the third floor of the building well below the police "dead line" and bordering on the financial district.

The loft is protected by electric equipment and every entrance is heavily barred, but this did not deter the yeggmen. They apparently were equipped with an oxy-acetylene torch and used it effectively to burn through the lock of an iron barred gate, after which they cut their way around a lock on a wooden door, which admitted them to the room in which the safe, with its valuable contents, stood.

The yeggmen probably worked on this safe for hours before they finally succeeded in burning out the combination, after which they worked the tumblers and opened the door. The inner door was opened in a similar manner, the torch being used to spring the hinges.

Hyman W. Sluyter and Julius Blitz, who compose the firm, admitted the robbery and placed their loss at between $60,000 and $75,000. They refused to discuss the details, saying that the police had instructed them to say nothing.

No alarm was sounded by the yeggmen during the hours in the building. The alarms were found all connected, which leads to the theory that the robbers disconnected the wire on entering and reconnected it when leaving. The burglary was discovered when the work-shop was opened for business Monday morning.

# The Gorilla

By KATHERINE STAGG

## PART TWO

### CHAPTER FOUR

GYP had sent word that she was too ill to see any one, but he figured she would be sure to recover much more quickly if she could only see her dog. So Detective Marvin, after a fortifying bite of bacon and eggs, repaired again to the station-house, got the dog and the negro, and took a taxi to Maggie's fine old brick domicile.

He did not have the chance to see the reunion between Gyp and the dog, but he guessed rightly it would be a most happy one.

He had armed himself with a quantity of cigarettes, and next proceeded to spend a seemingly careless afternoon playing craps with the bunch of gobs.

They were a bit stiff and awkward at first, but soon forgot that he was a detective in the interest of the game, and in an hour were tossing their usual line of chatter about as if nothing had occurred out of the usual.

Children at heart, they guyed each other and scrapped away to their usual limit.

Three long hours spent this way were far from wasted. Marvin's careful observation of the running bits of gossip dropped by the men summed up about as follows:

Gyp was adored by all of them, but very specially by the late Tony Mullen, who had been pursuing her, evidently in a way to rouse remarks among even that careless bunch.

That a neglected wife, who lived in Boston, made periodic visits to the company, and had made it hot for Mullen many a time when she had got word of some special philandering.

That Timmy was a very troublesome and resentful little brat on occasion. He had been heard to threaten Mullen after one of the spankings that he so richly deserved when he impishly imperiled the success of the big "Gob Act."

Here Marvin registered a thrill when he thought of that torn and chewed thing in his pocket, for it almost certainly was a "T" on the monogram. It looked bad for Timmy.

Two of the gobs had caught Mullen kissing Mrs. Deyo in the wings only a night before, and they had heard them quarreling violently off and on all week.

"The Gorilla! Where is he?" asked Marvin after a while, when he began to notice that they left his name out of the gossip in a way that could not be accident.

No one answered for a minute. Then a gob straightened up and shook the ivory cubes in his hand.

"Say, boss, it ain't exactly healthy to hand round much talk about Biff; he's a good enough guy in most ways, but if he gets sore on yer——" A queer pause as they all exchanged glances that were half fear and half enjoyment. "Well, the Gorilla wouldn't think nothin' of cracking all of us up to a heap of bones, an' laughin' at it. But I'll say one thing: he ain't no fellow to use a gun. Take him, good and sore for ennything, and a gun would look like weakness to him!"

This remark was so naive, but so confidently made, that it brought to the mind a vision of primitive and magnificent powers and passions seldom encountered in our silly little guarded world.

Marvin himself, a big and muscular man,

recalled to mind our arboreal ancestors. It seemed almost a memory that went singing through his brain of great hairy brutes, blows exchanged, blood spilled, bones lying in the moonlight, while victors slept the deep sleep of jungle triumph.

He finally brought himself up with a start to realize his twentieth-century surroundings.

What was there about this fellow they called the Gorilla to rouse these cave-man thrills in his usually modern and well-controlled mind?

And where was the fellow, anyhow?

As he went over the bits of evidence he had accumulated he saw that they pointed more directly toward Timmy than any other person, but how ironic it seemed of Fate to throw suspicion on that poor misshapen mite of humanity when this man of monster personality was equally a sharer in the circumstantial web.

Feeling that he needed to get some outside air to clear his brain of that curious obsession that had so taken hold of him, he said good-by to the boys, promising to look in again in the evening.

Running down the stairs, a door opened in front of him, and Gyp stood before his surprised eyes, coated and hatted and smiling.

"Well, young man," she greeted him, "my poor old larynx is back on the job, and if you are still willing to put up for the eats, we'll call it dinner, and I think I have a bit of info that may prove a tasty dessert. How about it?"

"With bells on, and the quicker the better. Any old place in this brittle valley of man's iniquity you wish. I don't know just what is the matter with me, but I feel as if nothing was real, as if everything was, as I just said, brittle. Did you ever feel that way?"

Gyp nodded with a queer expression.

"Maybe a break's coming!" she said.

Hailing a passing taxi, they drove to the "Blue Pigeon," a favorite of Detective Marvin's, and the scene of many a consultation while he was carrying on a case.

Plenty of palms and space enough between the tables made it an ideal spot for confidences.

Gyp seemed inclined to be loquacious; perhaps the hours of enforced silence was partly the cause. She did not wait for the dessert before she made at least one contribution to his scant collection of facts.

She reminded him that when the crime was committed or just before, she was the only person facing the back of the stage, as she was then standing on the table, directly opposite Mullen. His position was exactly in the centre of the stage facing out front, the table being stretched from wing to wing.

This being the case, she had seen several things the others would not have had the chance to see.

Marvin studied the piquant face before him. So candid and open was her gaze that he felt sure she would frankly tell him the truth without that circumlocution and conjecture with which women seem to feel it is incumbent to embroider most of their statements. And yet he felt a certain sense of hesitation in asking her outright if she had actually seen the sneaking coward who had shot from the dark.

After the entree had been disposed of Marvin leaned toward her and asked suddenly:

"Did you know that your dog was in possession of a bit of cambric that he held on to like dear life until a thunder-clap scared him into surrender?"

"So that's how you got it, eh? I've been wondering how in the world you managed to get the best of 'Boy,' for I would stake my life on him any day."

"So you did see that?"

"Yes, in a way; I saw the shadow of the dog in the flash of the pistol. I knew he had gotten something. What I also saw most distinctly was a figure skulking about in the back. I thought nothing of it at first, supposing it to be the watchman or some of the boys after smokes. I saw the big fellow, the one they call the Gorilla, when he went out, and thought maybe it was him, for it was rather dark back there. I had noticed that the Deyo woman had gone out some time before and had got a scarf and

had thrown it around her shoulders. I remember seeing her stooping over, as if tying her shoe, in the left upper entrance, to be exact in our stage language. Then something attracted my attention, and for the life of me I can't remember if she came back to her seat before it happened or not."

"Hm! Do you know if there is any truth in this rumor of a more or less ancient love affair between Mullen and this dame?"

Gyp laughed a rather rueful little laugh.

"Poor Mullen! He has written his last love-letter, unless they give him a class to teach in that art wherever the purgatorical committee has put him. Tony Mullen without a love affair on hand has never been known since he was out of knickerbockers, and they were all very serious. I've often wondered how much his wife knew and how she could stand his capers?"

"By the way, do you think there was any truth in that story of the Gorilla's that he went to get a message from Mullen's wife?"

"He must have got it on the fly if he did, for Maggie told me to-day that Biff rushed into the house with his arm bleeding from a nasty long scratch, which he laid to the theatre cat. That sounded a little queer to me, but that is what he said, and he made a beeline for his room and changed his clothes, and you know yourself that he was back in the party very quick. I don't know just how quick. Maggie says that his sleeve was quite torn and stained with the blood. This couldn't have anything to do with the meeting, so she hated to speak of it. But I wanted you to know it just the same."

"Do you know if Biff had had any quarrel with Mullen, or if there was any bad feeling between them?"

Gyp gave him a funny look before she replied; then she laughed again.

"Oh, what's the use? It's such a funny old world. You must understand that in my business if a girl is even passably attractive, she has to run the gauntlet between an endless avenue of men who are always trying to make love to her. It gets pretty tiresome at times, I can tell you, but that is the way the world seems built. Just in the last week Mullen was on my trail, and this Biff, I've seen him looking at Mullen mighty ugly when he had bothered me a little more than usual."

It was clear that Gyp, with all her veneer of worldliness, had hated to say even this much.

"But the gobs all say that the Gorilla would be the last man in the world to do a shooting act; that fists are much more in his line."

"I don't mean for a minute that I even thought he did that!" Gyp was terribly emphatic and fairly beat her small hands on the table as she looked deep into Marvin's eyes. All the little devils of mischief in her soul were hidden away for a moment, and the heart of a real woman showed in her eloquence.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

THE gobs began to get so restless that Marvin felt he would gain little by keeping them under durance, even of a mild description; so, when an offer came for a date for the act, he gave his consent, but took certain precautions about having his own men present in sufficient numbers to meet any emergency. The play was to be given on an excursion boat.

Fortunately for them, Mullen had been but a minor performer, although his brains had originated the act, and the management had been solely in his control. When this offer came they talked it over and agreed they could give the performance. Then they elected the Gorilla to act as manager. All were to share on a pro rata basis, according to their former salaries, after deducting all the expenses, including a royalty to be sent the widow of Mullen. A wire had been sent to her to that effect, but no answer received, and a vague report had gotten around that she was ill in Boston. So they just went ahead, and took it for granted that this arrangement would be satisfactory to all concerned.

The day was fine, and the excursion, with its usual load of men and women and their

babies and baskets, crowded the boat to the limit.

At a well-known grove up the Hudson they disembarked for the games and sporting events that were the delight of the association.

The gobs were full of pep after laying off, and gave a show that gladdened the hearts of one and all, even if a certain amount of illusion was wanting in seeing the act staged in full sunshine on a platform instead of on a real stage in a theatre.

The Gorilla fairly outdid himself in his feats of strength and daring, and Timmy followed his every heroic pose and miraculous prowess with an imitativeness that was so ludicrous that he kept the huge crowd in roars of laughter.

The baskets were mostly empty, the babies were howling or sleeping, and the sun was setting in a blaze of glory as they re-embarked for the trip home. It was the most successful excursion in history, but never did we know of an event of the kind to terminate without some little dash of roughhouse like tabasco needed to flavor the best dish of a banquet.

Detective Marvin had been the busiest man on board; he had affiliated with all the toppers, had played with the babies, had danced with some of the prettiest of the maidens, and had seemed to be everywhere at once.

But while attention had been centered on the athletic and sporting events, he found a chance to enter the shack that served as dressing-room for the "Lunatic Gobs."

The boys had arrived dressed in all the glory of the "sports" variety, carrying their suits and props in suitcases. So it was not difficult while they were doing their act for Marvin to take a look at what he called in his mind with a grin of amusement their lingerie.

It was quite a study, for the boys made good money, and the finest of shirts that could be purchased shone in a row of shimmering silk on the convenient nails.

One after the other he inspected carefully. A number sported monograms, and Timmy's were the finest among them, but he failed to find any that seemed to be the duplicate of the torn fragment in his pocket. Timmy's was a most intricate design, almost like a crest or coat-of-arms, and the idea shot through his mind that some day he would find out just who the little creature was. He knew the dwarf was Austrian by birth, and a hint of romance seemed to be hiding in his possible history.

The Gorilla's things, while of the finest quality, were of the severest plainness, with no initial or monogram visible.

This search being fruitless really meant nothing, for if the owner of the bloody bit of cambric had a grain of caution all the matched specimens would have been destroyed long before now.

When the sun had sunk behind the hills and the shadows of Storm King were growing purple as they steamed down the majestic river, Marvin sought out the Gorilla where he was leaning over the rail, smoking his usual huge cigar.

Marvin had noticed that the big star of the act had kept by himself all day and worn a glowering expression, as if he were thoroughly out of tune with his surroundings.

Every time Marvin tried to talk with Biff he felt curiously ill at ease, and yet there was something about him that Marvin could not help but like. Savage, fierce, and ruthless, no doubt; cunning, too, if goaded by necessity, still there was a rugged and wordless grandeur about the fellow and his prodigious physical strength that made all the men about him appear as if they were of a pygmy race compared to him. Marvin had thought at first that his mind was of the gorilla limit, but he had found in a few limited talks that the balance did not work that way. He was scant in education possibly, but had a force of mentality that guided his sledge-hammer style in every move.

That was the true secret of the power of the strange fellow.

After a long pause Marvin began talking.

"Say, Biff, I wish you'd be a good fellow, and come clean about this murder of Mullen; I know you are keeping something back, and I should think you would want to see justice done."

The mottled eyes turned to him grimly,

with almost a look of amusement in their tawny depths.

"I reckon justice was done," he drawled in his deep voice.

"I get you. It does look like the Deyo chap, but he seems like a pink-livered sort of guy to me that wouldn't have the nerve to do his man, even if he had cause."

The Gorilla rumbled a sound that might have been a chuckle, but was portentous in its suggestion of savage satisfaction.

"How about the female of the species?" he asked, still more slowly and emitting a great volume of smoke that drifted out over the quiet of the river.

Marvin felt like one taking a hazardous dive in the dark, but he drawled almost as slowly:

"You mean Gyp?"

The Gorilla had been leaning with one hand on a camp-chair, but with one motion he snapped it in pieces and flung them over the rail, as if he had broken a match. Then he whirled on Marvin and hissed:

"God! No, she didn't do it!"

"Then you know who did?"

"Yes, I know, damn you, but it will be ten thousand years before you get it out of me!"

He wheeled and left the detective.

"A glorious brute you are, my man," whispered Marvin to himself, "but I have seen a pit bull give up something because fear entered the equation. I think I know a trick that will work as well with you. Ten thousand years is a long time. You have put the weapon in my hands, and just a few hours will see you sing a different tune. But, holy Moses, what strength the fellow's got!"

Marvin almost felt his own bones crunch as he watched the fragments of the broken chair float down with the current.

A very dramatic and racy coup had occurred to the fertile mind of the detective, and he stood there for a few minutes planning the details, enjoying the anticipation of bringing the Gorilla to the point of bending to his will.

"Zowie!" he muttered. "It will sure be Big Medicine night in the wigwam if I can swing it, and I will!"

Just then above the blare of the dance music on the barge he caught the sound of a perfect tornado of shouts and yells. Some new diversion was clearly afoot—a fight probably, and he raced as hard as he could hurdle over chairs and baskets to the scene.

"As I thought!" he cried.

The Gorilla had found a worthy foe and had gone into action.

Some of the hoodlums had been heckling Timmy, and urged him to try feat after feat, until somehow he had fallen and broken his arm. A dozen of them had him in a corner of the deck, and were all of the rougher element, half drunk and ready for anything.

They got it.

Biff had been in a surly mood all day, and his few words with Marvin had made him furiously angry. When he came on the group and saw what had happened to the little chap, he went berserker, and descended on them like a human catapult.

When Marvin reached the spot all he could distinguish was a whirling mass of arms and legs, with the Gorilla cracking heads together and shouting a veritable war chant.

Marvin felt his sporting blood leap, and he would gladly have watched the combat: he knew it would only be a matter of minutes when Biff would make mincemeat of the whole dozen. But that would interfere with his own plans. It was a shame to stop the great battle, but he pulled his whistle and summoned his own men, scattered over the barge.

Reaching over the fallen Timmy, he whispered to him:

"Call off the big fellow; we've got to stop this or there will be gunplay."

At the same time he chanced a shot in the air. It served to attract attention for a second, and they looked to see who else had come to their rough-house. Then Timmy piped:

"Say, Biff, lay off. Come here; I want you."

It was almost comic to see how the Gorilla answered to the call of his tiny pal. Kicking and throwing a half-dozen of the roughs from him, he walked over to his

comrade and picked him up tenderly in his long arms. Then he wheeled with his paculiar circling motion and started up the deck to look for aid for Timmy, the little chap meantime clinging to him and crying like a baby.

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## CHAPTER SIX

THE next night after the regular performance at the Odeon Theatre, Detective Marvin held a replica of the party of the night before. But how different!

The scene was arranged on the stage, exactly as on that other fatal night, but without any of the gay accessories.

The long table was there, but empty of food or drink.

The party were seated in chairs in the same positions they had occupied, with a manikin of a figure in the centre chair, where Tony Mullen had presided and received his birthday congratulations.

It was to be a ghastly rehearsal of that other night, and each man and woman had his or her instructions from Detective Marvin to try as nearly as possible to remember just what they had done on that occasion. The sole exception to the realism being that no lights were to go out, but each person must do what they had done in full light, the moment being designated by a signal. Twice he had made them go through this, but each time there had been a few discrepancies; either they did not remember correctly or they couldn't or wouldn't follow the sequence.

The Gorilla had been surly and obstinate, acting as if he thought it a sort of smart play on the part of the detective.

The plan wasn't working so well, after all, for Biff continued to refuse to play up when Marvin sprang his best card.

"Miss Gypsy LeRoy, will you tell me now if it was you who screamed when the lights went out the second time?"

"Yes, I think I did, for I felt my throat closing, and it always frightens me terribly for fear I will never regain the power to speak."

"Were you angry with Tony Mullen on that particular night?"

"I had been at the matinee when he got too fresh, but I had put that out of my mind on account of the party."

"One of these gobs has told me he thinks that Mullen left his pistol on his dressing-room table after he had paid a bill. Did you see it there as you went in to give him his birthday gift—a box of handkerchiefs, I understand?"

"Yes," in a scared, muffled voice.

"Were these handkerchiefs marked with a monogram—an 'M' 'G'?"

"Yes."

"Do you know how to fire a pistol?"

Before the girl could answer Biff sprang from his place and shouted:

"Stop grilling that girl; she didn't do it, and I know who did."

"And are you going to wait ten thousand years to tell?"

But before the big fellow could answer the hardest question of his life it was answered for him. A new figure came on the scene, racing from the wings with a silky rustle of skirts.

"Mullen's wife!" some one hissed.

"I did it," she shrieked. "Biff tried to stop me, and I scratched him until the blood came, but I didn't care, and I don't care now. I did for him, and this is the finish."

Another shot rang through the theatre, and the woman fell at the side of the chair where her husband had smiled his last.

Marvin turned to Gyp to apologize for his moment's accusal, but her eyes were uplifted to those of the Gorilla in adoration, for she now realized his nobility of soul in protecting Mullen's wife.

"She was my sister," he said, gazing straight at Marvin.

"I understand," answered the detective. "I'm glad I'm through with the case."

*(The End)*

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**A NEW SERIAL STORY**
**"THE PAPER CLUE"**
By WARREN W. VAN GORDEN
BEGINS IN THE NEXT NUMBER
**Read It!**

# A Splash of Green Paint

by Lloyd Lonergan

THE girl came stumbling down the steps of the modest brown-stone house. Her eyes were wide and staring, and there was a look of horror in them. It would have been plain, even to a casual observer, that she had been through some frightful experience—something terrible that had left its imprint of fear upon her. As she reached the sidewalk she swayed and almost collapsed, then regained her self-control with an obvious effort turned and started to walk off down street.

"Miss Beresford! Why, what is the matter?" cried a man who had come up behind her as he touched her on the shoulder. The girl shrank away from him, then halted, as she realized that escape was impossible, and looked up at him pleadingly, forcing a smile to her pale lips as she did so.

"It's—it's—nothing!" she stammered. "I'm overtired, I guess, Mr. Murray. The—the—hot weather, too. Good-night!" And simulating a composure she did not feel she nodded casually and walked away. She wanted to run, but did not dare. But the girl had only taken a few steps when Murray's hand again fell on her shoulder, and she stopped short with a half-stifled shriek.

"Not so fast," said the man, eyeing her suspiciously. "Somehow I don't like the looks of things. Here I find you at night, slinking out of my partner's house like a"—he stopped, stared at her keenly, then continued in accusatory tones—"like a murderess!"

The girl, trying to suppress a shriek, tried to run off down street, but Murray leaped forward and grabbed her. There was a struggle, but the man's superior strength prevailed, and she relaxed in his arms with a half-stifled sob.

Holding her firmly, Murray started to question her, but the girl, now on the verge of hysterics, simply pleaded with him to let her go. Almost immediately they were interrupted by the arrival of a third party, a portly man of good-natured appearance, attired in a blue serge suit. He had noted the two as he came around the corner, decided that something was wrong, so hurried over to them.

"I'm Detective Sergeant Leonard of this precinct," the stout man explained. "What are you manhandling this girl for, and"—with a suspicious look at the young woman

—"why didn't she scream when you were doing it?"

"Glad you came along, sergeant," replied Murray, still retaining his grip on the girl's arm. "There's something wrong going on, and it needs to be investigated. That house next-door"—he indicated with a wave of his free hand—"is where Benjamin Wilford lives. I'm his partner, John Murray—firm is Wilford & Murray, you know. Happened to be walking through the street to-night, and just as I was abreast of the house Miss Beresford sneaked out. She's Wilford's private secretary, and I'd never have given the matter a thought only her actions were so peculiar—so furtive. After trying to question her, and growing more and more suspicious because of the way she acted, I told her she would have to accompany me back to the house so her strange conduct could be reported to Wilford. Then she tried to run away, and I wouldn't let her. Now you know the whole story."

Leonard stepped to the other side of the shrinking girl and slipped his arm in hers.

"Mr. Murray has the right idea," he said soothingly. "Probably there is nothing wrong, but we will all feel better by proving it. Come along," and the trio, walking abreast, the girl in the centre, went up the steps and into the house, the door of which was still standing ajar.

Edna Beresford had been in almost a daze throughout this, stepping along mechanically, but as they reached the inside hallway she tried, in frenzied fashion, to free herself, looking in terror at the same time toward the library door, which was half open.

"Don't go in there," she pleaded. "I can't look at it. Please don't." Then, as the others kept on, disregarding her appeal, she fell back in their arms, half fainting. They half carried, half supported her into the room and gently placed her on a sofa, where she relapsed into unconsciousness.

"Poor little girl!" muttered Leonard. "She'll be all right in a few minutes, though. "He looked around and whistled softly. "No wonder she keeled over," he commented. "Looks mighty bad for *her*, doesn't it?"

At a chair in the centre of the room was the body of a man, sprawling over against the long, flat-topped library desk. And Murray promptly identified the corpse as that of his partner, Benjamin Wilford.

"Well, I won't have much work to do on this case," declared Leonard, as he picked up the telephone. He called headquarters, was connected with his station, gave some orders, then turned to Murray. "Promised my wife to meet her after the theatre," he explained, "and this matter won't detain me very long. While we're waiting for the other boys I'll look around," he added as he walked over to the body and started to examine it. "Here's a start, anyhow," he commented as he pulled a thin piece of steel from the dead man's breast. "Funny-looking weapon. Looks like somebody's paper-knife. Recognize it?"

He passed the weapon to Murray, who examined it with painstaking care, then handed it back to the detective.

"I could almost swear that it belongs to Miss Beresford," he said slowly. "Yes, I am practically sure of it. At least I have seen a paper-knife of almost identical appearance on her desk in the office."

"Atta boy," was the admiring reply. "Pays to have a keen eye, especially in the detective business." He glanced over toward the sofa, where Edna Beresford still lay in a huddled heap, now conscious, but her body shaken by the sobs she could not suppress. "The little lady is in no condition to talk just yet. Suppose, while she pulls herself together, that you give me your theory of this case. Just for my own information, you understand. It won't go any further, but it gives me a line to work upon."

"Well," responded Murray, with marked hesitation, "of course I don't know very much about her. Miss Beresford has been Wilford's private secretary for a year or so, and really I never paid much attention to her. Would see her at the office every day, but we seldom had occasion to speak, except to say 'Good-morning' or when she came to me with some message from Wilford. I know nothing about her family or home life, and she always impressed me as being a pleasant, refined young lady, al-

though I *have* heard——" He stopped abruptly.

"Go on," commanded Leonard. "You *have* heard? Heard what?"

"Why, nothing worth mentioning," stammered Murray, decidedly ill at ease. "Rumors, you know, the idle gossip that is afloat in every office. I'd rather not repeat it. Just whispers and slander—the kind of stuff that evil-minded persons indulge in—persons who delight in blackening the reputation of a woman."

"The idle rumors," deduced Leonard, "were details, more or less complete and accurate, regarding love passages between your partner and his secretary. Am I right?"

Perhaps Leonard had spoken as he did for the purpose of arousing Miss Beresford. If so his tactics were successful, for the young woman now raised herself to a sitting posture, weakly and with an effort, and addressed him.

"How dare you say such things?" she cried. "Mr. Wilford always was a gentleman." Then, casting a venomous glance at Murray, she went on: "I'm not surprised to hear *you* slander the dead. Were he alive you'd never dare to do so."

"Now, Miss Beresford," protested Murray, "you're overwrought—excited. Just the same, there's no use in denying there *has* been gossip about you and my partner. Some people say——"

"I don't care what they say," declared the girl proudly. "He did love me—yes. And he planned to marry me in the fall or next spring."

"But I never heard of it, and——"

"Why should you? Mr. Wilford was your business associate, but he never regarded you as a friend. He told me himself he didn't trust you." She broke down and sobbed. Murray looked at the detective and shrugged his shoulders helplessly. Leonard pantomimed silence, crossed to the girl, and sat on the sofa beside her, patting her hand in a fatherly way.

"There, there, little girl," he remarked in soothing tones, "don't worry. Remember, I mean to help you. Most policemen would think you killed your employer in a fit of jealous rage, but I am sure you didn't. Things *do* look dark, but only for the moment. So just tell me all you know concerning the case. Please remember that you are innocent, and consequently anything you say will help, not harm you. Now then, how did you happen to come here to-night?"

Murray, unseen by the others, grinned. He could understand the detective's scheme. Leonard meant to jolly the girl along and have her commit herself before she realized what she had done. Apparently the detective had chosen the right method, for Miss Beresford calmed down almost immediately.

"I live on Mohegan avenue, up in the Bronx," she said. "While I was at supper to-night Mr. Wilford called up on the telephone and asked me to come to his house to-night at nine o'clock exactly, as there was some important work that had come up unexpectedly and he wanted it attended to without delay."

"So Mr. Wilford called you himself?" asked Leonard. Apparently this question called up a doubt that had been in the girl's own mind, for she knitted her brows and reflected before she replied:

"Well, he *said* he was Mr. Wilford, but, now that you mention it, I couldn't swear it *was* him. You see, he has had a bad cold for the past few days, and that made his voice very husky. Over the telephone I had difficulty in making out what he said. In fact it was necessary for him to repeat his message several times before I could understand it."

"Oh, I guess it was him, all right," retorted the detective carelessly. "Men in my profession always have to ask foolish questions. Don't mind me. Just go ahead. What time did you get the message?"

"It was around half-past seven, I think. Well, I came here as directed, and when I rang the bell there was no answer. Then, as I tried again, I noticed that the front door was ajar, pushed it open and entered. Mr. Wilford I knew would be in the library, so I went there and found him—dead. It frightened me so badly that I tried to run away, and what happened after that I don't

know. Oh, please let me go home!" and she began to sob again.

The detective was still questioning the girl when the reinforcements he had sent for arrived. Under his orders Patrolman Jackson took Murray and Miss Beresford into an adjoining room, leaving Deputy Coroner Phelan to examine the body. After a brief conference with the physician, Leonard and Patrolman Conners searched the house, with the result that the butler, Grigsby, was found in his room on the top floor unconscious.

"Drugged!" was the snap decision of the uniformed man.

"Dead to the world from booze," declared his superior, after a brief survey. "Probably got hold of some extra strong bootleg whisky."

"Think he croaked the guy?"

"Not a chance in the world," replied Leonard. "He's just an innocent spectator. Throw him in the bathtub and see what effect cold water will have on him. By the time you have brought him back to earth I'll be ready to question him. While waiting for you I think I'll take a look—see outside."

For nearly half an hour Murray and Miss Beresford remained under the gloomy guardianship of Jackson. Then Leonard returned, and a few minutes later Grigsby, very shaky, was brought downstairs, and he collapsed again when he was informed that his employer had been mysteriously murdered.

"I don't know a thing about it," protested the butler. "After supper to-night Mr. Wilford told me I could have the evening off, although it wasn't my regular night. I went to my room about seven-thirty, and while dressing to go out I—well, I took a drink or so."

"Several 'so's," interjected Leonard.

"Only a few," was the hasty rejoinder. "Anyway, it was early, and I fell asleep on the bed, and the next thing I knew was when I woke up in the bathtub."

In reply to other questions Grigsby supplied no information of interest. He didn't know who, if anybody, had come to the house, and there was no one who could tell, for the butler was the only servant who "slept in" at Benjamin Wilford's bachelor establishment. Grigsby also declared that the front door was locked when he went upstairs.

"So then," Leonard summed up, "it seems very clear that either Wilford let his murderer in, or else that person had a key." He turned to Miss Beresford politely. "You haven't one, I suppose? Of course not. I remember now the door was open when you called. But did you notice any signs of other visitors?" And as she shook her head he addressed the same question to Murray.

"I?" the junior partner responded in surprise. "Why, we came in together."

"But I am talking of before that—while Miss Beresford was here alone, when you ran up to the front door and intercepted her."

"You've got that all wrong," replied Murray impatiently. "I haven't been in the house for three weeks or more. Seldom come here. I was down the street when Miss Beresford came out of the house, but her actions aroused my curiosity, so I ran after her when she reached the sidewalk, and was talking to her when you came along."

"That's right," apologized Leonard. "Of course you didn't see anybody here. My mistake. Well, under the circumstances, I think we'd better go around to the station. Cap has a stenographer, who can take down your statements in official style."

"Does this mean I am under arrest?" demanded the girl, again growing hysterical. "Do you think I killed him?"

"Not at all," replied Leonard suavely. "I'm not accusing anybody. Don't you understand that Mr. Murray and the butler are going with us? All I want is to have you people meet the captain. He will be interested, of course. Yes, Miss Beresford, I can safely promise that in half an hour or so you will be at liberty."

The detective held a brief conversation with Grigsby, the butler, then, leaving Patrolman Jackson in charge of the house, departed with the others for his home precinct. There the party was ushered into the

private office of Captain Perrin, and found that official eagerly awaiting them.

"Evening, captain," said Leonard briskly; "I've worked fast on this case, and it's all cleared up. Meet Mr. John Murray, partner of the victim." Murray advanced with outstretched hand, but halted abruptly as Leonard continued his summary in casual tones:

"Murray killed Wilford, and tried to put the blame on this girl, Miss Edna Beresford."

Murray's face grew ghastly white. He tried to speak, but the words would not come. And Leonard continued to talk, seemingly paying no attention to the suspect.

"It was mighty clumsy work, cap," the sleuth went on. "Anybody could have spotted it. Here's what Murray did: He killed Wilford around eight o'clock, then lurked about the neighborhood until the girl appeared at nine, lured there by a phony telephone call. She's a nervous little thing, and Murray banked on that. Figured that when she saw the body she'd get scared and hysterical, imagine she'd be pinched for the murder, so try and run away. Just exactly what she *did* do. And when she came out Murray was there, grabbed her and turned her over to me when I came running up. Poor boob! He thought he was sitting pretty, but he made blunders to burn.

"For one thing, if the girl killed Wilford, it could only have been a few minutes before I came upon the scene, and yet when we got in the library *Wilford had been dead for fully an hour.* You know I studied medicine before I went on the force, and the doctor from the coroner's office will swear to the same thing. And then there's another matter, even better than expert medical evidence which sometimes juries disregard; there's something that proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that Murray was in the house before the girl got there tonight."

"I wasn't. You're bluffing. Nobody saw me!" shrieked Murray.

"Listen, you miserable little crook," replied Leonard sternly, "you have already said in the presence of three witnesses that your last visit to Benjamin Wilford's home was three weeks ago."

"And it's the truth!" cried the suspect.

"When you and I took Miss Beresford into your victim's residence to-night," the detective continued, "I held her right arm, you held her left. That means you gripped her with your right hand. Correct?"

"That's true enough," replied Murray with a sneer, "but I don't see it makes any difference. Say, what kind of Sherlock Holmes stuff are you trying to pull?"

"Murray," said the detective sharply, "I've proven, and you've admitted, that when you went into that house with me your right hand never touched the railing." He grabbed the prisoner by the wrist and held up the palm so all could see. "Under the circumstances, how do you explain these marks?"

On the thumb and forefinger of Murray's right hand was a slight smear, dark green in color. The broker looked at it, hesitated, then shook his head.

"I don't know where that came from," he faltered.

"But I do," replied Leonard. "Listen. Yesterday the railing of the Wilford house was repainted, painted a dark green, and it isn't completely dry even yet. And near the top of the steps is the imprint of a hand, or rather part of a hand, where somebody brushed against the rail, coming in or going out of the house. And if you were not in the place, how does it happen that your fingerprints are there? And how did you get that stain when we know that your right hand never touched the railing when you were with me?"

Murray, terrorstricken, gazed at his inquisitor, then, with desperate energy, pulled a handkerchief from his pocket.

"Don't try to rub it off," advised Leonard with a laugh. "There are plenty of witnesses to swear to it. Besides, there is lots of other evidence. Want an outline of it? Well, you had played hanky panky with the firm's finances. Wilford got wise and threatened you with exposure. You phoned to him this evening, then came up to plead with him; found it was useless, so killed him, using as a weapon the girl's paper-

knife, which you had stolen for that purpose; lured Miss Beresford to the place by a phony message supposed to be from her employer, and tried to put the blame on her, hinting that she and Wilford were lovers and that the man had thrown her down. I don't care whether you confess or not. We've got the goods. Take him away, boys."

And Murray, shrieking and protesting, was led to a cell.

"Have you got enough to hold him on?" the captain asked anxiously when he and Leonard were alone. "A lot of that stuff of yours is bull, isn't it?"

"Yes, I was stabbing in the dark," conceded the detective. "It's a pretty safe bet, though, that I am right, and I purposely made the details vague. That marked hand is about all there is to it now, but he'll come across. Murray is one of those yellow-livered curs who is sure to squeal when the screws are put on him. Best to leave him alone for a while so he can stare and stare at the badge of Cain on his hand and wonder how much we really know.

"It's a cinch case, although the butler helped out a bit. Funny how most people think telephone conversations are private. Usually somebody along the line has his or her ears open. Well, it seems that during supper there was a call for Wilford, and Grigsby, who is nosey, like most butlers, listened in on the extension. He believes the caller was Murray, and Grigsby heard Wilford say, 'I've arranged that we will be alone in the house, so call at eight, and I'll give you a chance to explain, if you *can* explain.' Yes, the cause of the crime was easy to dope out, once I knew Murray had been there ahead of the girl and denied it. He'll spill what we want, all right, all right."

And Murray did confess, for his guilty conscience made him believe that the police had all sorts of evidence against him, when in reality, at the time of his arrest, the only clue that pointed directly to him was a splash of green paint.

## LUCKY PRISONERS

PRISON life in Switzerland is a luxury instead of a punishment. The comic opera jail at Thorburg, where the inmates did as they pleased, has only recently been suppressed by the Berne authorities, yet details are published of a similar institution at Sarnen in the canton of Oswald. Sarnen is apparently an ideal resort, for the happy criminals who are sentenced to terms of "detention" in that institution have a far better time than hundreds of "free" Swiss citizens who are forced to earn their bread.

A correspondent of a Lausanne paper says that he was passing through Sarnen when he saw a number of men dressed in dark-blue clothes with white stripes walking about the village smoking and joking. Others were seated in a café, and some were working in a leisurely manner carrying bricks for the construction of a new building.

To his astonishment the correspondent found that the men were convicts from the cantonal prison close by. These convicts are permitted to leave the prison early in the morning and find work around Sarnen or walk about the country until nightfall, when they return of their own accord to the prison. They are unaccompanied by wardens, and there is nothing to prevent their escaping, but they are far too comfortable to think of relinquishing their quarters, for they have as much liberty as other men, and are, moreover, fed and lodged for nothing. The money earned by these convicts who choose to work can be spent as they like.

One convict who is employed as a gardener by a local magistrate sends his monthly salary to his wife and children. Two or three convicts "escaped" some weeks ago, but they eventually returned to the prison in a half-famished condition, and after being severely reprimanded they were allowed to return to their apartments

# The Game of Bunco

By AN EX-DETECTIVE

IT is hard to say where the word "bunco" was born. It comes, if not from the gutter, at least from an origin of no better, if even of as moral, a character. Its first appearance to the best of my knowledge was in the early part of the seventies, when it was added to the list of such sporting words, so called, as faro, keno, loto and the like. At the outset it was the equivalent of "confidence operation," but after a brief while it became limited to express those transactions in which a swindler secures money or valuables from a victim who willingly parts with his property in the hope of securing a pretended reward of ludicrously enormous proportions.

The success of the first "steerer" and "hand-shaker" upon the ignorant and credulous brought imitators into the business. These tried their hands upon men whom the original workers would never have approached, and found to their surprise that education and knowledge of the world did not protect their possessors. They continued in their experimenting until, having buncoed Charles Francis Adams, Commodore Garrison, Oscar Wilde, the distinguished apostle of esthetic culture, and other men of prominence in various fields, they concluded that every man was capable of being robbed in this manner, provided, of course, that the right operator and right mode of attack were employed.

Nearly all the famous bunco men are well-dressed, mild-mannered, quiet speaking and companionable fellows. Many of them would be ornaments to a parlor, and most would-be popular and thriving business men if their talents were honestly and properly applied. "Hungry Joe," who did yeoman's service for the State in Sing Sing, would surely pass muster in many of our clubs. "Kid Muller," until his last fracas, in which his face was seriously disfigured, might be and probably has been, mistaken for a theological student.

Harry Ashton looked like a prosperous Wall Street broker, and talks as well as two-thirds of that fraternity. "Cigarette Harry," or Harry Desmond, or Henry Dressner, who served a term in the Buffalo Penitentiary, resembled a lawyer or a politician of the better type. Will Hawley cultivated literature in his leisure hours and showed considerable ability as a newspaper man. Frequently when in bad luck or when desirous of getting a reference as to character he worked for the daily press, and always done creditable work. Sig Hess was a typical young salesman of the better class. "Easy Archie" aped the gilded youth who follow the anise bag at Rockaway, and made, it must be admitted, a very clever imitation. "Doc" was the typical physician of a few years' standing, and actually studied a while in some medical institution.

Like every other art, the bunco of to-day has innumerable variations. The commonest form that comes to the notice of the police is as follows:

Mr. Smith, a well-to-do farmer or tradesman, comes to New York from his native town, Smithville. He carries with him a well-filled wallet, which, being distrustful of hotel clerks and hotel safes, he carries in some inside pocket. Near the Brooklyn Bridge, the Central Park plaza, Madison or Union Square, he is accosted by a pleasant-mannered man who shakes his hand violently and says in the most friendly fashion: "Brown, dear boy, how are you!"

Mr. Smith draws himself up and replies: "You've made a mistake, young man. I'm not Brown. My name is Smith—Ephraim Smith, of Smithville, Smith County, Pa."

This is all the "hand-shaker" wants—the man's name and address. Frequently, in fact generally, these are not given as short

and pat as in the interview described. Frequently he half suspects the friendly stranger and a brief talk is needful to secure the desired information. When it is given the accomplice joins the bunco man, who is not far away, and who has at this moment in his hand a small bankers' directory, which contains a list of all the banks in the Union by States, the names of their president, secretary, cashier and sometimes other information. As the accomplice reaches the worker he says: "Pennsylvania—Smithville, Smith County," and together they run down the entry. It usually reads as follows:

SMITHVILLE.—First Nat'l—Jabez Jaggs, Pres't; William A. Snow, Sec.; John Porter, C'shr.

Smith County—John Piggsnap, Pres't and Sec.

The bunco man trained to this work needs not to write these entries down to remember them. He runs them over twice and can then recall them to the letter at any time until the job is over. He approaches the victim, who has moved leisurely along in the meantime, pleasantly bows as he reaches him, coughs slightly and says:

"Why, good-morning, Mr. Smith. It is a pleasure to meet you in New York. How are your folks and how is my uncle, Jabez Jaggs?"

He may vary this according to his man. He may address him as squire, judge, colonel, major and captain. He is pretty certain to use a military title if upon Smith's person he has seen a Grand Army button, badge, or other insignia. He may use the judicial title if the victim looks as if he had ever been a justice of the peace, court clerk, constable, or other official. For to all such the words squire and judge have a strangely sweet and fascinating sound. It makes but little difference what words are used. Those which are employed are pleasantly put and make Smith believe at the outset that here is some one who knows him and his and who is glad to see him in the great wilderness where he is already lonely and unhappy. There may be some mistake, however. So smiling at his new-found acquaintance he slowly drawls out:

"I reckon you've got the best of me, my friend. I can't place you to save my durned old eyes!"

The victory is half won. The bunco in a second has seen that the man is glad to meet an acquaintance, and what is more important, that he does not suspect. He adds heartily, "Well, I wouldn't be surprised. I haven't been there now for three years, and the last time I was on I only stayed a week. I'm Charlie Jaggs, son of Edward, who is the brother of Jabez, the president of your First National Bank. I met you last talking one day on some loan or other business to Snow, the secretary. How are all your folks?"

This ninety-nine times out of a hundred more than satisfies Smith. In all probability he has a slight acquaintanceship and a profound awe for Jaggs, the local millionaire. Snow he knows better from having had slight financial operations with him. As a result he is delighted at being regarded in New York as the friend of a man who has intimate relations with the Treasury at Washington and the Stock Exchange in Wall Street. He unbosoms himself to the banker's nephew, and for a dreary quarter hour tells the interminable tale of measles among his children, pip in the chickens, dry rot in the potatoes, his daughter's engagement to his neighbor's son, and all the other details of bucolic life.

The next step is to further impress Smith as well as to please him. The bunco man took his victim to the bar of some first-class hotel where merchants, politicians and prominent men congregated if this happened before prohibition. A popular delusion is that it is a low saloon or dark groggery. It never is except by the least skillful "crooks." Up to the bar they go. If Smith uses intoxicants so much the worse for him. As they stand near the gleaming crystal and silver the banker's nephew points out the celebrities.

"That's Chauncey M. Depew" (bowing to some politician who faintly resembles the great wit and railroadist and who bows effusively in return, as nearly all New York

politicians are in the habit of doing). "That's Mayor Hylan there drinking champagne with his brother. They are worth $10,000,000 and never drink anything else. That big man is the hotel detective. He arrests every criminal who dares to come in the house. It's a good thing because it protects a man from desperate characters and that's what makes this place so popular with gentlemen and business men."

So runs the glib talk of the bunco man. It is "calculated to deceive the best critics," as the *Bank Note Reporter* appropriately phrases it, and it does deceive the listener whose horizon for years has been the boundaries of his town. The audacity displayed is sometimes bewildering. They have taken their victim into the rogues' gallery, into the mayor's office, the Common Council Chamber, and the Court of Sessions. They have introduced him to editors, hotel keepers, public officials, and on one or two occasions, it is reported, to the county clerk himself. Confidence once gained, the operator begins the second act of the drama. This is to take his prey to the place where one or more colleagues are awaiting his arrival, and where the actual swindle is perpetrated. The scheme employed in this transaction varies infinitely. Sometimes it is the Louisiana lottery, sometimes a policy shop; it may be the wheel fortune, keno, craps, "green goods," dice, poker, euchre, cribbage, whist, roulette, rouge et noir, "rolling the log," three-card monte, thimble-rigging, "the envelope game," or Heaven knows what not. Of the men who are swindled not more than one in five report their loss to the police, and of these no two tell the same story alike. The commonest trick is for the buncoist to give his colleagues in the office a lottery ticket for which he is supposed to have paid $25 and to receive $250 cash in return. He counts it methodically while the victim sympathizes in delight at his friend's good fortune. The cashier announces that the special weekly drawing will be held in fifteen minutes, and that $500 will in every probability win $5,000 in good money. The stranger accepts or hesitates. Generally he has only $200 or $300 about his person. The bunco man comes to his help. He will take a half risk and divide the profits. The interest is bought, the drawing occurs, and the selection wins nothing or a small sum. But it always comes within an ace of hitting the capital prize. At this point the victim "sours," to use a slang phrase, and often "squeals," to use another. Sometimes his credulity is so great that he continues playing until bankrupt. If when he perceives that he is being robbed he shows the white feather, he is either beaten or scared into a silent and hasty flight. In any case the victim is quickly disposed of, peaceably if possible, forcibly if needful.

It is opposed to the etiquette of bunco to rob a man by force. It is also much more severely punished by the law. An action of this sort cost Hungry Joe his liberty and his prestige as the "first operator in the land." The intended victim foolishly displayed a large roll of bills in his hand to Joe and his partners after having refused to venture a penny upon any scheme. Joe, hungrier than usual, snatched the money and ran away, committing robbery instead of the swindling he had contemplated.

Another odd feature of the art is the aversion of the bunco man to remain long in the same place, either "the office" where he does business, or the house or rooms where he resides. It is not from fear of the police, as all or nearly all the worthies are known by face, name and record to the force. So constant are the changes that it would require a large volume to keep their record. It might be supposed that the police would have difficulty in apprehending one in case he were wanted for some offense. The very opposite, however, is the fact. They are gregarious in their habits, more like wolves than bears. Nearly every one knows of the whereabouts of the rest, and being aware of the difficuly of conviction for buncoing has no hesitation in giving information as to a friend or pal. A second mode of placing them arises from their convivial and social habits. They are debarred from good hotels on the one side, and on the other will not patronize low saloons and cheap groggeries. They therefore frequent those sporting houses where

a man's character has neither value nor meaning, and where their company, on account of their extravagance and folly, is warmly welcomed. These establishments are not many in number and are all familiar to the police.

A third method of locating them is based on their singular addiction to the opium and heroin joints, and since these were prohibited by law, to the private dope clubs which are scattered throughout the city. Of the five or six hundred affairs of this class it is fair to assume that two-thirds are made up of crooks. It is also fair to assume that three-fourths of all the bunco men are victims of the habit. Hungry Joe, and especially two insignificant confidence operators who have adopted his name, have been recognized by detective-sergeants in such places times numberless; Harry Ashton, the Bogus Harry Ashton, "Doc," John Palmer and Lew Martin spent twenty-four hours at a stretch in "hitting the pipe" or sniffing cocaine, while Cigarette Harry, Sam Goldstein, Philadelphia Harry and Jim McVickar have been known to lie off on a bunk forty-eight and even seventy-two consecutive hours. On this account the suppression of the public joints increased detective labor. It was much easier then to search a few joints for an accused than it is now to visit fifty sporting houses and a hundred clubs.

To the question that is so often put to the police, "Why don't you suppress bunco and arrest all bunco men?" the only answer is the question, "How can you do it?" They are never disorderly in their conduct, their victims seldom complain, and when they do complain usually fail through excitement to identify the swindler. When an old provision of law is called into play and they are arrested as vagrants, it certainly is ridiculous to accuse a man of being without visible means of support who is the best-dressed man in the courtroom, and who almost invariably has more money and more valuable jewelry about his person than the judge or the district attorney. The true remedy would be a statute whereby any confidence operator seen pursuing his business who cannot satisfactorily prove that he is engaged in legitimate business should be adjudged a professional criminal or thief and fined or imprisoned, in the discretion of the magistrate. Until then the only thing that can be done is for the police to use their discretion and often club and drive these thieves from precinct to precinct, and in everywise both interfere with their nefarious trade and call public attention to their faces and characters.

Though the buncoist has fair seas and smooth sailing compared with other criminals, he has but one end—the State prison.

There is no more pitiable object than the bunco man who sees a detective or police official approach him whom he knows. Fear, cringing and abject; hopelessness mixed with puny bravado, despair and the hope that his turn has not come yet, are the lights that shine over his cunning face. There is another end for some of them—death from morphinization. These votaries of the Eastern drug finally reach a stage when the sharp brain refuses to act and the supple body to longer move. Beyond this is Bellevue; Blackwell's Island, the morgue and potter's field are the next and final steps.

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## JUDGE LOCKED IN VAULT

BERNARD E. HIGGINS, Judge of the Borough Court, Torrington, Conn., was locked up in the court vault through an oversight recently.

The judge entered the vault in the clerk's office to go over some evidence. The noon whistle blew and Eugene T. O'Sullivan, clerk, closed the door and went to luncheon.

Forty minutes later, after he had opened the vault door, he listened to a few emphatic remarks from the jurist. O'Sullivan had been summoned from luncheon by the janitor, who heard noises within the vault.

# All Coppers aren't Easy

by John Bradford Main

"TAKE it from me, Shaughnessy, an' lay off the guy!"

Patrolman Peter Shaughnessy gulped.

"But he's wanted, sir; he's wanted, I tell you!"

"I don't give a d——n if he's wanted for murder! You lay offen him!"

Dan McCarthy brought a ham-like fist down on the table with resounding emphasis.

"He's a friend o' mine, an' I'm takin' care of him, see? And th' copper that pinches him is goin' to get a chance t' show the trial board how smart he *is!*"

"Y' ever take th' efficiency tests, Shaughnessy?"

"You know I didn't," replied Shaughnessy dourly. "They didn't have 'em when I joined th' force."

"Think y' could pass 'em now?" probed the boss. "Think th' trial board 'd take your record into consideration if y' couldn't pass?"

Shaughnessy grunted.

"You know they won't," declared McCarthy, answering his own question. "They'll ask y' all sorts o' questions y' can't answer, an' then, when y' flunk, they'll 'retire' y' for inefficiency, that's what they'll do!"

"But, my God, McCarthy! Have a heart! If I meet th' lad, I got t' take him in! He's wanted. Tell 'im to keep out o' my way. I don't want t' have t' pinch him. Tell him—oh, hell!—I'm not *lookin'* for him!"

"You're dawg-gone right you ain't lookin' ' f'r him!" the boss repeated. "You can't see him, d' you understand? If you wuz t' pass him on th' street now, y' wouldn't recognize him!"

Shaughnessy heaved himself out of his chair. His face was a mottle purple.

"I gotta get back on my beat," he muttered.

"You think it over," said the boss.

Shaughnessy plodded out.

It had been twenty-eight years since Peter Shaughnessy, then a mere stripling, had taken his place in the blue-coated ranks. In all those twenty-eight years he had never been faced with a problem such as this.

The name Shaughnessy was an honorable one on the rolls of the department. There was David Shaughnessy, Peter's father, dead now, whose star reposed with others in the memorial case in the chief's office. David Shaughnessy had died rather than re-

treat when duty called upon him to arrest a pay-roll bandit.

And there was Martin Shaughnessy, Peter's uncle, a sergeant in Harvard avenue station until he was retired two years before. "One straight copper," was the way Martin was known throughout the force.

Yes, and there was Tom, Peter's older brother. Tom was a wagon man at Lake street station, and was known far and wide as a "good guy."

And it had been into this dynasty that Peter had stepped. A Shaughnessy could do no less.

"Ye'll be an officer whin ye grow up, lad," his father was wont to instruct him, he recalled. "Ye'll wear th' blue coat an' brass buttons an' th' star.

"Ye'll find crooks wearin' th' unyfor-rm. An' they'll try t' make a crook o' ye, too, belike. They'll show ye th' smallness o' yur pay. They'll tell ye it shud be more—an' it shud. They'll chide ye for a fule f'r runnin' the risks ye run f'r th' pay ye get—which is a str-range thing that ye shud do, 'tis thrue. But it's not a fule ye'll be bein', lad, not a fule.

"Ye don't have t' be a copper, lad, onless ye want t' be. Ye must think ut out f'r yourself. But if ye follow yer ol' man, ye've got t' be a *straight* copper.

"All coppers ar-ren't crooked, boy. Don't ye be one o' thim that is. Oi'll have no son o' mine disgrace th' unyform Oi wear!"

It had been a short month after old David had told his son this that he was shot down in the pay-roll robbery. Peter was nineteen then. On his twenty-first birthday he joined the force.

The man who shot his father had escaped, nor was his identity known. Young Peter swore he'd "get" him. Although years passed, that vow was never far from his mind. It was a standing joke in the department that when Peter made an arrest, or when he found an older criminal behind the bars in the station cell, he always insisted upon putting one question:

"Where were you on the night of September 21, 1892?"

And here was Peter Shaughnessy now, after long years of honorable service, faced with the alternative of either going crooked or losing his job.

That he would lose it if he did not obey "Boss" McCarthy, he had no doubt. McCarthy would hale him before the trial board; "frame" an examination if necessary. Shaughnessy knew that he would be unable to pass the tests. His schooldays were too far behind.

He had no illusions. He knew the futility of attempting to forestall McCarthy by applying to his "pull" himself. McCarthy could simply prefer charges and demand that he, Shaughnessy, be examined as to "mental efficiency." There was no logical reason why so-and-so, who had never taken the tests, should be excepted from taking them just because he had thus far succeeded in the evasion.

McCarthy's demands were plain. Patrolman Peter Shaughnessy must "lay off of" David Gregg. Gregg was a crook, a safe-blower and a bandit. He was wanted for "jumping" $20,000 bonds on a robbery charge.

Shaughnessy had caught sight of the wanted man the day before. He had trailed him to a saloon in the neighborhood, and had only been prevented from arresting him by the inopportune intervention of an outstretched foot, which sent the policeman sprawling onto the floor the while Gregg dashed out a rear door.

Twenty-four hours later McCarthy summoned the officer and delivered his ultimatum.

Peter shivered. A crook! A Shaughnessy a crook! Betraying the uniform his father had died for!

Shaughnessy thought of Mary then and of the kids—hungry little mouths to feed, tiny little bodies to clothe. For himself he didn't care. If he were retired from the force he could probably get a job somewhere as a private watchman. But the salary would be small, smaller even than his present pay. To contemplate a job other than police work was beyond the question. He was fitted for nothing else. He had no money with which to set himself up in business. Two or three thousand dollars would have meant salvation. With that he

could set himself up in a little cigar store or shop of some sort—but what use such wishes? Every cent he had had been put into his little home, just paid for.

McCarthy had him! Had him on the hip! Well, supposing he acceded to McCarthy's demand? The thought was anathema. But suppose he did?

Would that be all? Shaughnessy knew the boss. It would not. Next time it would be something deeper. McCarthy would know that he was afraid of him, that he would do anything to hold his job. And McCarthy would not hesitate to make use of his knowledge.

Torn between conflicting emotions, Peter stood at the curb, twirling his club and staring straight ahead with unseeing eyes. Across the street a jauntily dressed fellow, whose graying hair belied his youthful clothing, eyed Peter maliciously.

So intent was this onlooker that he did not notice the actions of a third man, a pedestrian who halted abruptly with a stifled exclamation. For a moment the tableau remained, Peter staring off into space, the gray-haired man eyeing Peter, and the third actor in the little drama gaping at the gray-haired one. Then the tableau melted into action.

The third man leaped forward, grasping the gray-haired one by the shoulder.

Whirling as quickly, the older man planted his fist on the other's jaw, knocking him into the gutter.

"Police! Help!" shouted the fallen one, struggling to rise.

The gray-haired man took to his heels.

Shaughnessy came wide awake the instant the cry for help sounded. He placed the source of the call at the precise moment that the young-old fellow started running.

"Gregg!" he growled under his breath, lumbering across the street.

A thousand thoughts and plans chased through his brain. Out of them all rose the seething problem: Should he capture Gregg or let him escape?

Overtake him he could. To permit his escape would be even easier. All that would be necessary would be to stop a moment and inquire the cause of the disturbance before continuing the chase. None would know that he had recognized Gregg. No taint of suspicion would ever attach to him. Even McCarthy would not know—this time. It would mean so much—to the wife and kids.

But here, stop! Stop, you fool, stop! Cursing himself for an idiot, Shaughnessy ran on. Past the fallen man he sped, no longer lumbering, but running easily, putting every mite of strength into the chase. A half block ahead ran Gregg.

Shaughnessy's hand sought beneath his blouse and appeared gripping the butt of his revolver. The few pedestrians along the street ran to escape from between the policeman and his quarry.

"Halt!" yelled Peter, the cry coming in a sharp staccato of expelled breath.

The fugitive kept on.

"Halt!" cried Peter again, begrudging every breath of wind, but mindful of regulations. "Halt, or I'll shoot!"

Gregg paid no heed except, perhaps, to endeavor to increase his speed.

It is not easy to hit a running man. It is even more difficult when he who is shooting is likewise running. Peter's first bullet missed. His second was equally wide of the mark.

Gregg was nearing the corner. Once around the bend he probably would succeed in losing his pursuer.

Peter stopped.

He stood very still, controlling a great desire to expand his chest to the limit with gigantic breaths of air.

His left arm doubled horizontally in front of him, forearm level with his eyes. Resting on his forearm, his pistol barrel wavered and grew still as the officer drew down on his target.

*Crack!*

Almost at the end of the block the running man appeared to crumple in mid-air. A hoarse scream floated back to the patrolman. The figure of his quarry collapsed on the walk.

Peter ran forward. His brain was on fire. He could think of only two things: He had killed a man, and his job was gone.

A crowd quickly gathered about the pros-

trate crook and the kneeling officer. It necessitated but a glance for Peter to ascertain that Gregg was dying. The bullet had hit him in the back, penetrating a lung, and had come out the chest. With every labored gasp a red bubble of froth appeared on Gregg's lips.

As Peter leaned close to unbutton the wounded man's vest, Gregg's lips twisted in a vindictive snarl.

"Dan'll—get you—f'r—dis!" he gasped.

"I know it," said Peter.

A man—he whom Gregg had knocked down—elbowed his way through the crowd. He stooped over Peter, searching Gregg's face.

"It's him! It's him!" he declared excitedly, straightening up.

"'S who?" demanded Peter, not looking up.

"The man who held up the Citizens' National Bank last month! I'm the cashier. There's $5,000 reward for him. You've done a good job, officer, a very good job!"

Five thousand dollars! The little shop—salvation! Peter bent closer to the man on the ground. Aroused by the word "job," Gregg was struggling to speak.

"Job?" he muttered. "Job? I—it'll be—your—job, you—see!"

Peter was silent. His silence appeared to rouse the last flame of vindictiveness in the dying bandit. With tremendous effort, blood welling out of his mouth and nostrils, face contorted in pain and rage, Gregg raised himself in Peter's arms.

"D' y' hear me, Shaughnessy?" he screamed. "Do y'? I got yuh! I got yuh just as good as I got yer ol' man!"

"What!" cried Shaughnessy, all thoughts of what the $5,000 would mean obliterated. "What's that?"

"Yer ol'—man—tried t'—get me—an'—he—got his!" Gregg mumbled. "I—I—plugged 'im. You—you'll—get—yours f'r—this—too!"

A red mist clouded Peter's vision. He saw the livid face before him grimace in pain. He felt the body in his arms contract and stiffen.

"Wh-where were you on the night of September 21, 1892?" he breathed.

There was no answer. Gregg was dead.

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## A SLIPPERY CONVICT

THE "Oregon boot" and other apparatus fastened to Richard A. Palmer when he left New York recently in custody of a California sheriff failed to work. Lieutenant Frazer of the East 51st Street Station received a telegram saying Palmer, who was on his way to San Quentin Prison, California, escaped from the sheriff near Rawlins, Wyo.

Palmer has escaped twice from prison and twice from trains on the way to prison. He is twenty-nine and says he is a mining engineer.

In April, 1919, Palmer was sentenced to five years in San Quentin for burglary. In September, 1920, he made his first escape. He was soon recaptured, but jumped from a train on his way back. The train was speeding at fifty miles an hour, and Palmer was badly hurt. Two soldiers picked him up later and saved him from death.

He was sent back to jail, but escaped again February 23. His whereabouts were unknown until September 28. He was then living here at a first-class hotel, and was arrested, charged with having stolen $125 on a train from Boston. He persuaded the police of the East 51st Street Station he knew nothing of the theft, and was about to leave when a detective recognized him.

The California sheriff came on, and decided he would take no chances with the slippery Palmer. His feet were manacled as well as his hands, and he wore the "Oregon boot," footgear made partly of lead and weighing thirteen pounds a boot. There was also a heavy steel chain that was supposed to make it impossible for the wearer to run without breaking a leg

# Scientific Conviction of Criminals

By CARL H. GETZ

DURING the past few weeks the newspapers of America have contained numerous references to a device said to have been perfected by Dr. William Marston, of American University, Washington, D. C., and described as a "lie detector." The impression has been given that this is an original device. The truth is that practically every college and university in the United States gives courses in psychology which include one or two lectures on psychological and physiological means of unearthing evidence with which to convict criminals. Supplementing and illustrating the lectures there are usually a series of laboratory tests in which various kinds of apparatus are used, including the one which Doctor Marston uses and which he calls a "sphygmomanometer."

This so-called "lie detector" is the commonest of the different kinds of apparatus used by professors of psychology and physiology. It consists of a long, silken bag, an indicator, and a bulb to pump air into the tube, and is placed on the brachial or arm artery to test the blood pressure. The bag is wrapped around the arm below the elbow. Fear, pain and anger cause the indicator to jump around. If the patient tells a lie, Dr. Marston says, the needle will jump from 50 to 60 points.

Usually two other kinds of apparatus are used at the same time with the "lie detector." The one records regularity or irregularly of heart-beats, which is practically what the "lie detector" does, but this second machine operates in somewhat a different way. The plan is to place a cloth bracelet about the suspect's wrist. In the inside of this bracelet is a metal disc an inch in diameter. This disc is placed directly over where a physician feels for one's pulse. Attached to the bracelet is a tiny rubber hose which is connected with an inverted, miniature test tube usually clamped in a wooden frame. The test tube is two-thirds filled with water. When the bracelet is properly adjusted the water in the tube will rise and fall as the heart beats.

A third apparatus used frequently and usually simultaneously with the other two is a simple device consisting of a wide strip of cloth which is fastened about the chest, a metal disc about three inches in diameter to which is attached a thermometer at an upright position. This disc is fastened against a man's bare chest and with the thermometer a record of bodily temperature is obtained.

Usually the three different devices are used at the same time. The theory is that while a man may conceal all outward manifestation of emotion he has no control over his heart, his blood pressure and the temperature of his body.

The plan usually is to have the suspect appear before the investigator and possibly one assistant. No police officers are present. Usually care is taken not to make the test at any police station, but rather in the living-room of some home. A definite effort is made first to make all the conditions such that the suspect will be as nearly normal as possible.

After the various devices have been applied to the suspect's body they invariably indicate unusual blood pressure and unusually high temperature. This is to be expected because of the excitement under which the man is living for the moment. Every effort is made to get him back to as nearly normal as possible.

The experiment consists simply of asking questions related and unrelated to the crime. Now it is a psychological and a physiological fact that a man cannot tell an untruth without his body recording higher blood pressure and higher body temperature. The

hardened criminal learns to be dishonest without his feeling any emotion. But the fact that he knows that the apparatus in front of him will detect lies excites him and as a result his failure to tell the truth is invariably detected.

The story is told in Seattle, Wash., how the city police were unable to tell which one of five men were guilty of a certain crime. The police were certain they had their man but they could not determine which one of the five it was. They tried all kinds of methods but without success. Finally, a psychologist, a member of the faculty of the University of Washington, was called in. He spent a week getting all of the details and in interviewing every one who knew anything about the crime. Finally he asked that the five men under suspicion be brought to his home.

This professor used machines to detect irregularities in blood pressure, heart beats and temperature. After he had all of the devices properly adjusted he began to give a scholarly lecture on the use of psychological and physiological means of obtaining evidence to convict criminals. He explained each of the devices. He made no mention of the specific crime in which he was interested.

He explained the theory of the devices. Then he continued:

"Suppose that one of you gentlemen was suspected of being guilty of a crime, not any particular crime, but any crime. You come here. One of you is guilty. He knows it. I don't because his face and actions tell me nothing. He controls his outward emotions. But then he submits to such an experiment as this. I then can see what he can and what he can't control. I can soon pick my man. In fact, I know who he is now. I—"

And right there the professor was interrupted by the sight of one of the men fainting and falling heavily to the floor. An hour later he confessed his guilt.

Still another device is common in college laboratories. It consists of a metal stand to which is attached at right angles a metal rod at the end of which are what look like candy tongs. At the end of these tongs are two ivory tabs. Connected with these tongs are a series of electrical wires attached to dry batteries and attached also to a stop-watch indicator which records time to the one-thousandth of a minute.

When the two ivory tabs are pressed together an electrical circuit is formed. When the tabs are apart the circuit is broken. The indicator records the exact amount of time which elapsed from the time the circuit was formed until it was broken.

In using this apparatus the plan is to have the suspect close his teeth about these two tabs. Then a word is expressed to him and he is instructed beforehand to express the first word, and only the first one, that comes into his mind. In opening his mouth to utter a word the time is recorded. If he attempted to substitute a word the indicator will record it at once.

The theory here concerns the association of ideas. It is contended that a man has no control over what comes into his mind when he hears words expressed to him. It is a psychological fact that words related to the expressed words will come.

The plan is to select about 100 or 150 words and to have every tenth word related to the crime. The answers invariably indicate guilt or innocence.

It might be said that any one familiar with a crime would reply with related words which would indicate guilt. This is but partly true. It is not true when from 100 to 150 words are used.

So-called psychological evidence has never been admitted in an American court of justice. Professors of psychology and physiology have no hope or desire that the day will come when such evidence will be admitted. They hold that these psychological methods are a means to an end rather than an end in themselves. They help to obtain confessions, for example.

Police officials are usually skeptical of all psychological means of detecting crime. Many of them prefer what they describe as "the third degree," nothing more or less than the terrorizing of a suspect by means of bodily punishment and the forcing of a confession to escape further pain.

These psychological methods are scientifically sound and the day will come when

police departments include in their personnel trained psychologists.

Nearly every criminal fears the physician and the scientist more than he fears the police officer or even the judge. The physician and psychologist fights on a plane that the average criminal cannot comprehend. He feels his disadvantage.

There have been many instances in the United States where attempts have been made to introduce so-called psychological evidence in courts of justice but never with success. The reason given is that the evidence given is not conclusive.

This is a fair criticism. The thing to remember is that this evidence is really intended to obtain final evidence with which to convict. This fact is brought out in all of the cases where psychological evidence has been used at all.

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## FIRE DEPARTMENT SUPERSTITIONS

THE main "jinxes" of the Fire Department (there are no lucky superstitions) have to do with false alarms, multiples of three, jinx personalities, the poles they slide down, substitution and the alarm that comes in just before the shift is to be relieved.

"There is no dodging the fact that most accidents such as collisions, being run over, being hurled from the car, happen in answering a false alarm," firemen say.

It would be as difficult to persuade firemen that fires do not run in threes, that the third "roll out" will not be a "worker," that the third alarm on a big fire will not mean heavy work and injury, as to persuade a mathematician that two and two do not make four.

Just as soon as a detailed man enters the station door some of the oracles in blue remark, "Well, we'll roll out to a worker today, all right." Then, according to traditions, within an hour the alarm will ring and the fire is sure to be a "worker" or a "third alarm."

As to officers, it sometimes happens that a whole company hate to work under some man they may personally like, because whenever he rides out the fire is sure to be a bad one.

Certain civilians are supposed to bring hard work. One man in particular takes an active interest in a certain engine house. He stops in frequently to chat. He will go up to the blackboard where the alarms are recorded, scan the calls, the location of which he knows as well as the men who answer them, then remark, "Well, you haven't had a fire at such and such a street in a long time." "Nine to one," say the firemen of that particular engine house, "we have a fire in the location he has named before our hours of duty are up."

Several days of inactivity are held to portend a good, stiff fire.

Friday is "unlucky," but the thirteenth day of the month seems to have no terrors.

No fireman will slide down the same pole twice in succession.

For one fireman to "substitute" for another is held unlucky. When the substitute is on duty a fire is sure to occur, and if there is an accident, the victim will be the substitute. So runs this superstition.

Another form of substitution, called "covering up," is also held dangerous. To "cover up" means to fill in for another fireman who is late or absent without leave. The accidents happen to the man who "covers" and not to the one protected.

It is said that some firemen are afraid of ghosts on the last watches, which run from 12 to 3 A. M., and 3 to 6 A. M.

All firemen believe that no fireman ever gets rich. Many are plungers in Wall Street and play the races, but believe in advance that luck is against them.

Most annoying of all superstition is the belief that fires are most apt to occur when the shift is about to go off duty, but when that happens the firemen always accept the "spoiled evening" cheerfully and do their duty, as always.

# The Red Bandanna

by Edgar Daniel Kramer

LIKE a white ribbon carelessly flung across the landscape, the road twisted through the August twilight until it abruptly disappeared, much after the manner of a frightened jack-rabbit, in the thick shadows of the tamarack swamp to wind its way onward, tunneling through the underbrush and trees, flanked on either side by treacherous bogs that afforded footing but to the initiated few. Bent under his heavy pack, the peddler shuffled and slunk grotesquely down the hill, the dust rising in little puffs about his feet. He seemed a strange, misshapen thing in the half-light, a monster of phantasy, a conception come to life out of legendary lore. Above him the stars were winking into being; below him the meadows were silver seas of mist, through which the rank growth of the swamp thrust itself like a black scab. It was the time of twilight stillness, when the sounds of the day have ceased and the symphony of the summer night has not yet begun. The silence was oppressive, and the only visible movement was the peddler, plodding patiently and heavily along the white road.

Before entering the swamp the roadway ran through the meadows for about two hundred yards. The peddler plunged forward into the thick mist, which reached to his hips. As he advanced he appeared to be some legless, humped creature of frenzied imagination, rising and falling with rhythmic regularity upon the surface of an absolutely stagnant and ghostly sea. Then the blackness of the swamp suddenly swallowed him up.

Impenetrable walls of darkness closed in upon the peddler, for now the stars were shut away from him by the dense tree-tops. Underfoot the road rang cheeringly solid. The damp air was weighted with innumerable smells of rank growth, of dead water, of decaying vegetation. Countless fire-flies were weaving through the blackness like gleaming shuttles in an immeasurable loom. A bullfrog's throaty bellow close at hand startled the wayfarer. Then came silence as he hurried on, as if pursued by phantoms. A twig snapped behind him, and the peddler swung completely around. He sensed rather than saw a huge shape loom out of the shadows. A shrill cry of fear died upon his lips as a heavy club, with a dull, sickening thud, smashed down upon his skull. He fell backward with a queer, suprised grunt and sprawled awkwardly upon his back.

Cal Landers smiled grimly as he jerked

the body from its encumbrance and swung it easily over his shoulder.

"I tol' you to git," he grumbled breathlessly, "an' you didn't git!"

Then, dragging the pack, he turned at right-angles to the road and plunged deliberately into the swamp. As though this were a signal, the night on the instant became a medley of sound. A myriad insects came suddenly to vocal life, tree-frogs piped their shrill alarm, and over all resounded the reverberating boom of the great bull-frogs. Cal Landers knew his way thoroughly, so he advanced with careless assurance. A crashing of underbrush and a snapping of twigs marked his passage. After a strenuous hour he emerged into an open space. The moon was already high, and its peaceful light was shining down upon the greasy surface of the morass upon which gaseous bubbles were bursting here and there. Cal Landers dropped his burden and straightened his tall frame. As he stood there under the moon his hair showed gray, and his eyes were like blazing coals in his lean face. His efforts had left him bathed in perspiration, so he drew a large bandanna from his hip-pocket and mopped his face. With a look of keen satisfaction he lifted the clumsy pack and hurled it out into the bubbling mess. Then with an expression of disgust he tossed the body upon the pack, where it lay a hunched-up, hideous thing. As the mass slowly settled the slime hissed and gurgled and chuckled evilly.

"Thet settles you fer good, I reckon." Cal Landers shook his hairy fist furiously at what had once been the peddler. "You would stick 'roun', would you? Peddler? Huh! Though you was eatin' into my business, thet peddler stuff was only a blind. Thet settles fer you, I reckon, an' yer snoopin' 'roun' fer th' law."

He turned his back abruptly upon the dead man. He did not leave the swamp by the path of his coming, so upon emerging he was in the meadows and some distance from the road. Keeping in the shadows of the snake-fences, he circled around and came back to his little store on the side away from the swamp. He was very sure of himself as he stepped into the store, against the gloom of which a swinging oil-lamp made vain battle. The store was empty, and the quiet suddenly became oppressive, stifling to the man.

"Lou," he called huskily, his throat strangely dry.

Only the echo of his own voice answered him. He stared around with fear growing in his eyes.

"Lou!" he repeated angrily.

"Whar you been, pap?" a sobbing voice came to him from the next room.

"Drat you, gal!" he whined. "You cryin' fer thet good-fer-nothin'?"

"I love him," she confessed.

"An' him sendin' yer brother away to be hanged? What's eatin' you, gal?"

"An' you killed him?" she wailed.

"Good riddance," he snarled, "if he was dead."

His great body all a-tremble, he groped to a bench and flung himself down.

"What's ailin' me?" he muttered. "When a man's dead he's dead. Thet's th' end o' him."

He forced a laugh, which was merely a choking rattle. Sweat began trickling down his face in crazy little rivulets. His hand went to his hip-pocket.

"Gone!" he gasped. "I've—I've lost th' damned thing!"

With his bony knuckles he dug the sweat out of his eyes. Like an empty sack he sprawled upon the bench, his chin on his chest, his gorilla arms flung along the counter.

Hours passed and still he slumped there. The girl's sobbing had long since died as she wept herself to sleep. The oil-lamp spluttered and gasped and flickered out. In the sycamore beyond the window a hoot-owl kept calling plaintively. A bat flew in, knocked off the lamp chimney and, startled by the crash of glass, bumped about frantically until it once more gained the out-of-doors.

"Whar's th' damned thing?" Cal Landers kept mumbling. "I'm a goner if they find it. Thar ain't none like 'em in three counties. Th' agent tol' me so. I was a mad fool to lose it. It's likely too late now. I seed 'em huggin' an' kissin' in th' garden

an' things went red right off. Her lovin' th' likes o' him, a sneakin' spy of a peddler, who's sent th' son away fer murder. She loves him? Huh! He's dead an' I'll swing fer him now. Thet damned rag'll give me away. Thar ain't none like 'em. This sure is awful!"

When the dawn came Cal Landers pulled himself together in a desperate effort to retrieve the mistake of the night. In a few hours he had aged years. After he had killed the peddler he had been so sure of himself. He had so completely covered his tracks that there was not the remotest chance of his being suspected. Now all his assurance was dissipated; his confidence had sloughed from him as a snake sloughs its skin. He was only a trembling, pathetic old man, horribly afraid in the shadow of the gallows. For the red bandanna, which he had inadvertently left somewhere upon his trail, was crying out against him. His vanity had delighted in these gaudy things. He had taken childish pride in the fact that they were of a pattern of which there were none other in the community. Cal Landers's bandannas had become a by-word for that which was different, unusual, seldom seen. He cursed his vanity now and the bit of flaming cloth that lay somewhere ready to betray him.

As soon as there was sufficient light he put up the shutters of the store, locked the door, and stepped out wearily into the early morning. Involuntarily his eyes turned to the lowlands, and a great buzzard was swinging lazily over the swamp in wide circles. He shuddered. Carefully he scrutinized every inch of the way, the grasses, the bushes.

"What you a-lookin' fer, Cal?" kept ringing in his ears, as if it were coming from the lips of prying neighbors. He realized that it would never do to arouse their curiosity, so he became extremely cautious and hugged the shadows, even advanced on all fours in some places. He was but a few yards from the swamp in which he would be effectively screened, when upon the road to his left he heard the sound of wheels.

"Wonder who's drivin' this time o' day?" he asked himself aloud. "Won't do fer 'em to sight me," he thought, crouching and quaking in the high meadow grass, hearing yet not seeing the buggy that crept like a snail up the hill. When the sounds of its passing no longer came to him he headed into the swamp.

In a frenzy of haste he plunged along. Flocks of screaming birds rose before him. Brambles clutched at his clothing and tore his flesh. He gave no thought to these things. He knew that his search was nearly ended as he once more approached the morass into which he had hurled the peddler and his pack. It came to him like a flash that he had used the bandanna just before he had tumbled the pack into the slime. Bursting like a wild man from the tangle of the underbrush that edged the open space, Cal Landers stumbled to the quagmire, which lay as serene as he had found it in the moonlight. It was wearing an appearance of sly unctuousness, and a bubble, bursting here and there, seemed to be winking wisely, as if in the knowledge of hidden things. With a quick intake of breath, an agonized sigh of relief, he spied the red bandanna lying like a clot of blood on the oily surface of the morass.

A choking cry escaped him as he sank upon his knees and sought to seize it. His reach fell tantalizingly short. He tried again and again, but always with the same result. He drew back and crouched there, wide-eyed, staring at the bit of flaming cloth that seemed to be actually mocking him. Again he tried to grasp the bandanna. His face was ghastly white and perspiration was streaming from him. Suddenly he recoiled as if struck a blow, for in the depths of the slime in front of him he seemed to see the lank, cold face of the peddler staring up at him with accusing dead eyes. He trembled hideously, and covered his face with his hands to shut out the horrible sight.

"Thar's no other way!" he croaked. "I jus' must git thet damned rag!"

Holding for support to a frail bush with his left hand, he once more essayed to grasp the bandanna. His finger-tips just touched it. Breathlessly he leaned forward a trifle farther. He could feel the bush to which

he clung tearing from the unstable soil. In a last desperate effort his fingers clutched the flaming cloth. Realizing his danger, he sought to recover himself. Then a violent push from behind sent him sprawling headlong into the slimy ooze. As he fell, he twisted himself around with a prodigious muscular effort so that he landed flat upon his back.

"You?" Cal Landers gurgled, as he stared in startled amazement into the leering face of the peddler.

"I'm no ghost, Cal Landers," the peddler jeered. "I'm no ghost, though you surely tried to make me one."

Cal Landers lay very still. He could feel the morass drawing him down with irresistible fingers. He realized that struggling on his part would only hasten his hideous end. His eyes fairly popping from their sockets, his lower jaw sagging grotesquely, he glared his hate up at the peddler.

"You ain't no ghost?" he gulped.

"Not by a long shot!" the peddler laughed.

Cal Landers was both puzzled and amazed.

"You made the mistake, Cal Landers," the peddler explained, "of tossing me on the top of my pack. You didn't wallop me quite hard enough to finish me either. You pulled two big blunders there. I suppose I went down like a pole-axed ox and you reckoned I was done for. You should have chucked the pack on top of me. When I came to I jumped clear of the pack and here I am a little reception committee of one for your especial benefit and delectation. See?"

"Huh!" Cal Landers grunted.

"I found the bandanaa where you dropped it right here," the peddler went on. "I tossed it out there just beyond your reach and waited around. I know all about that pet vanity of yours and I knew you would be back. That's all, Cal Landers."

Cal Landers remained stoically silent.

"Now I'm going away from here," the peddler exulted.

"You be?"

"I am and I don't mind telling you now that I am not really a peddler. You will never be telling anybody now."

"Thet's no news to me," Cal Landers snarled. "You're a damned sneakin' spy!"

"I am an officer of the law," the peddler corrected, "and I've got the information I came after. That precious son of yours is doomed to be hanged. I've got the goods on him for that brutal murder of old man Holloway. His goose is cooked."

"You're goin' to hang my boy?"

"Higher than Haman!"

"You hev infermation?"

"Evidence, you mean," the peddler chuckled.

"Evidence then?"

"All I need and more."

"All you need?"

"So long, Cal Landers!" the peddler laughed. "I'm on my way!"

"Good luck!" the doomed man flung at him ironically.

The peddler swung around and started to push his way through the tangled underbrush. Sinking slowly into the bottomless abyss, Cal Landers lay listening intently and looking up unblinkingly into the bright blue vault of the sky.

"All th' infermation he wants," Cal Landers sighed. "I ain't so sure 'bout thet."

Suddenly a sharp, startled scream lifted above the thrashing of the bushes that marked the peddler's progress. Again and again that wild, hopeless cry rang in Cal Landers's ears. Then came solemn stillness.

"All th' infermation he wanted." Cal Landers smiled his satisfaction. "I hev my doubts. Thet's another officer of th' law who's done fer, I reckon. Infermation? Huh! He's a goner sure. Them blind holes is treacherous. A body's got to know these swamps."

# Three Twenty-Dollar Bills

## CHAPTER ONE

THE Elite Restaurant on Third avenue had done a good week's business, and now the Saturday night crowd had begun to thin out. A few stragglers still loitered at the tables. It was not a place of glitter and style, but just one of those thousands that cater to the clerks of both sexes who must, perforce, make furnished rooms and eating out take the place of a home.

A man sat at the table just at the side of the cashier's desk; he was reading a paper and smoking a cigarette; a tall, sandy-haired individual, clean-shaven and fairly well-dressed, but altogether so like hundreds of the usual customers that blue-eyed Annie behind the desk had not begun to notice him until he had been occupying the same table for a number of nights. His manner was quiet and courteous; he ordered liberally, and his tips were unusually good, the waitress had told Annie; so it was quite in order that he should be allowed to linger.

It might have been noticed that his very keen eyes lost not one tiny bit of action that took place at that busy desk. And it was a very busy desk at times, so busy that Annie absolutely couldn't keep tabs on the actions of any chance diner. She had some extra business of her own, too, that she managed to slide in between the making of change.

Twice the stranger had seen an Italian go to that desk and, after paying a modest check, hand Annie a card, which she slipped into her little bag that she kept on a high stool under the desk. This was all on these occasions, but to-night, when the Italian sauntered up the aisle, she had a paper ready, which she pushed toward the man. He covered it with a large glove, and a yellow-backed bill was deftly slid into Annie's slim white hand. The pantomime was so quickly and neatly done that it would have escaped notice had not Dan Foster been trained by years in the Secret Service to watch every little act in his surroundings.

With a pleasant 'Good-evening' the Italian passed out, but not a detail of the man's appearance or action had escaped Foster.

Annie was as pretty a cashier as one might find, with fluffy hair that looked like an aureole in its bobbed bronze curls. She hid a small round face of dimples and rose-leaf skin. Only a certain quick glint of the blue eyes made one know that knowledge of the world was seeping in on Annie's youth and sweetness.

Now came a bit of comedy as a contrast to the rather sinister act of a moment ago. A soft whistle sounded as a lagging step came from the back of the long room—a laughing whistle, if one can imagine such a thing. There was a slight pause, and Annie pursed her pretty lips and whistled in whispered harmony, but so softly that it could not have been heard more than a step or two away.

The whistler now came more quickly and eagerly, but still hesitantly. Foster hardly needed his sharp eyes to know that the fine-looking young man was blind; flotsam and jetsam of war, of course, for the youth was soldierly and gay in his bearing even now, and his smile was good to see.

"Listen, little girl, I got a new one to-night:

"Nancy, Nancy, girl of my fancy,
How I wish that I could see;
Nancy, would it be too chancy
For a girl like you to marry me?"

This was hummed very low, but with a rollicking air that bid defiance to fate and cruel circumstance.

"How can you, Bob?" Nancy exclaimed.

"Because I'm Irish, I guess, or a fool, maybe."

"Oh, no, Bob; never that."

"Well, I don't think I am, myself. It takes brains to love a girl like you, Nancy, and in my scrape I might have done a lot worse if I hadn't lamped you once before my lights went out."

"Bob! Honest to God, I could stand it better if you only weren't always so cheerful."

"I like that. Couldn't be a grouch if I tried."

"No, Bob, you're the original little sunbeam, stretched to six feet, and I've got to hand it to you. But it makes me choke up, and sometimes I think you pull that stuff just to get me tender-hearted." And Nancy frankly sniffled a tiny bit.

Bob laughed a rueful sort of chuckle that was somehow sadder than a torrent of complaint would have been.

We know that kind of bravery, but we seldom see it.

"Well, Lady Luck, got plenty of change to-night? I'm flush again, got a fine, new, silky feelin' twenty, and I think I'm a lord. If you will come up to my sister's when this joint closes we'll have some radio music and a bottle of real fizz. How about it, Nancy girl?"

The quick color flooded the girl's face. and her eyes took on that look of keen scrutiny that sat so strangely on her young features.

"Stop your kiddin', and call me Annie; that's my name."

"Yes, just this minute it is, for you are cross about something, but, Annie," with an absurd imitation of her sober tone, "is only your business name, and Nancy is your love name."

The boy's sightless eyes shone, and his voice was as soft as a caress as he said the words; plainly he was in dead earnest.

"Say, Bob, you must have stolen part of the old blarney-stone before you came over. I bet you've got it in your pocket; I can't change a twenty, either. Hand me out your small pennies and I'll see if you've got enough."

"Enough to pay for the ten-thousandth edition of hamburger steak which I have eaten since—since——" His voice trailed.

"Stop! You'll have me bellerin' in a minute."

"Say, Nancy, if we get married, will you promise to cut up my chops and chicken for me every day?"

"I never make promises on Saturdays." The girl's voice was flippant, and she bit her lip in evident vexation. "Come, hand out sixty-five cents and postpone the personal talk; I'm busy."

"Pardon me, I'm sorry, but really I haven't a bit of change in my pockets. Say, you must be able to change a twenty." The young man's tone was apologetic, but just a little abashed.

"Oh, all right; I'll manage it; hand it over."

And now Dan Foster's paper might have been seen to lower itself as he raised his keen eyes for a swift look; then he became more absorbed than ever in the contents of the sporting page.

But that swift, keen look had covered a queer transaction on the part of Nancy, for she took the proffered bill and made change as quickly as ever it was made, but not from the cash drawer at all, but from her own little bag, which she poked back out of sight with a motion that almost defied detection.

"Here you are; be careful of it. Good-night."

A look of bewilderment passed over the handsome features of Bob Henderson.

He started to say something more, but evidently felt that some one might be listening, so with a soldier-like straightening of his shoulders he grasped his cane and tapped his way to the door. But the spirit of him was unquenchable, for as he turned the knob he began to hum "The Radio Kiss," a new song by Candetti and Steiner that he had adopted as his favorite signal. This seemed a casual thing at the time, but in a few hours Nancy had reason to be mighty thankful that the ditty with its catchy melody had so impressed itself on her memory.

As the door closed on pitiful, good-look-

ing Bob a firm hand was placed on the girl's arm and a quiet voice spoke in her ear.

"I don't quite get your game, but I want that twenty-dollar bill, young woman."

"Whadda you mean?" Nancy was plainly startled.

"Hand over that phony twenty and then we'll talk."

"But Bob didn't——"

"No, I don't believe the young fellow you call 'Bob' does know, but *you* do! Or why didn't you put it in the cash register with the rest? There's some funny game going on here."

"But you can't do anything; I haven't cheated any one. I made it good out of my own money."

"I admit you're a good sport, but it's a dangerous sample you're indulging in. Now, look here; let's put our cards on the table." He showed his Secret Service credentials quietly, and the girl knew she was up against serious business.

"I been watching this place for a week, for the neighborhood has been flooded pretty well by these counterfeits—a very fair specimen of work, and I've got to find out the clever artist that is responsible. This is the second or third you've had from your friend Bob, is it not?"

"The third," she whispered with blanched lips.

"Do you know where he gets them?"

"Of course not," she snapped with some of her old fire.

"Well, you and I will have to find out, then."

"My God, man, you don't think a blind man could do such a thing. Bob Hendersen is the soul of honor."

"I am inclined to think you are right, and surely some very mean criminal is using him as his tool. But we are not going to take any chances at that. I saw him pass that phony bill to you, and you say that it is the third; so I rather think we will go after the dirty crook who is putting this over. Come, come, don't try any fainting act," for the girl was white and trembling and clutched the counter for support. "Where does this guy live, and when was it he passed the other bills? Do you mean to tell me you have been game to lose sixty dollars out of your wages without saying a word to him? Sorry, but it looks fishy."

"What's sixty dollars? Anyhow, I can't and won't have any trouble come to that poor fellow, and him so brave and all."

"Most young ladies in your position would think sixty dollars quite a sum, but perhaps you are getting a rake-off, and that is why you talk big. Come, girl, I don't want to be hard on you or your blind friend, but it all looks a bit too thick. Who is your Italian pal who slipped you the yellow-back about an hour ago?"

Annie had been startled before, but now she turned furious, and green flames seemed fairly to glitter in her eyes.

"Say, you may be a Secret Service man, but you cut out that line of talk. I've got as good a right to bootleg as any other lady in town who wants to make a handy piece of change.

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## CHAPTER TWO

DAN FOSTER was a busy man the next two days. After a tussle of wits with a woman's obstinacy he had prevailed on Annie to give him the three phony twenty-dollar bills on the promise that no action would be taken against blind Bob until they could find out where he got the counterfeits.

Down at Federal headquarters in the post-office they had put them through all the tests known and had found they were a very clever, ingenious imitation of the real article. Printed on genuine currency paper, they had evidently been photographed from a real twenty, then reproduced by half-tone, etched according to regular process, and really were a fair copy that would fool the most wary.

Foster had made a tour of the tradesmen in that Harlem section and found that many of the bills had been unloaded, nearly always by the blind man. It began to look as if poor Bob could not possibly be ignorant of the criminal nature of this, for why did he always insist on paying for every

purchase with a new twenty? His affliction and his open, charming manner had done much to make the passing of the bills an easy matter. But even a German grocer will notice after a while if a customer must have change for a twenty for each small purchase.

Annie had refused all information about Bob, but a blind man is a marked figure, and it was easy to trace him to his home. He lived with a married sister, whose husband was a chauffeur in the employ of some person down on Long Island, and only made occasional visits to his shabby little Harlem flat.

Tuesday night, about supper time, Dan Foster knocked at the door of that shabby little flat, and when a slatternly woman in a soiled kimono opened it he pushed his way in without ceremony.

Bob was seated in an armchair playing softly on a banjo. It was that same "Radio Kiss" song, and he played it with such a variety of modulations that it made one think of those old-time minstrel kings and what they could make a banjo do in the way of music. Dan stood quietly a moment and listened. Memories of his boyhood came back to him; real toe-tapping banjo music that!

Bob's handsome face had a faraway look, almost a happy one, and to the keen eyes of the detective there was not one line in that open face that indicated the criminal. But a very hard criminal surely lurked in the background, and Dan felt that he must not let sympathy interfere with his errand.

"Good-evening, Hendersen; I want to have a little talk with you; sorry to interrupt the concert. You sure can tickle that wood-box to beat anything I ever heard. But I am in something of a hurry."

The woman stared at Dan speculatively, glanced at the clock, and answered for Bob:

"He ain't got time to stop and talk now. He's goin' to play for a dance to-night, and it's time he's starting. I'll do the talkin'. What is it?" And she planted herself in a truculent manner between the two men.

Just then the clock struck. Bob hastily jumped up, seized his hat and cane, tucked the banjo under his arm and made for the door.

"Yes," he laughed, "I didn't know it was so late. Sister can talk for me, and then some. So-long."

Dan was not altogether sorry. He hated to bait a woman, but it was still worse to match wits with a blind man.

Dan seated himself nonchalantly in Bob's chair and looked keenly at the woman. She was a lazy, rather ignorant type, but hardly criminal. The sign marks of crime always bite deeper in the more impressionable nature of the female of the species, and once graven on their softer features they are more plainly read by the criminologist.

"You must find your brother a great responsibility?" Dan tentatively remarked.

"No," the woman replied; "he gets along awfully well. He has such a good disposition that every one likes him and is always ready to give him a helping hand."

"I can well believe that; he is really wonderful, but it must be a burden, just the same. He has not learned any of the vocational training things, has he? In other words, you are supporting him, are you not? I have a sort of plan for him, and that is why I am asking." Dan spoke easily, but watched the woman with all the power of those alert gray eyes.

"Oh, he plays around at a lot of dances, and does quite well; he ain't a burden exactly. Bob's awful popular."

"I was just wondering if he wouldn't like a regular cabaret job? That would be every night, and he would know just what he could make instead of it being clover one week and nothing the next."

"That sounds good, but he plays mostly by ear, as he can't see the new music to read and learn it."

"He might do solo work. Would fifty a week be as good as he averages now?"

"Why, I don't know. You see, an Italian gink over by the river most always gets him his dates, and he gives him twenty dollars a night. That's pretty good, and sometimes he gets some loose coin chucked to him besides. But that little old twenty-dollar bill is the regular pay, and, I can tell the world, it is a big help to us. Like many an-

other jane nowadays, I got a sort of husband, but I've lost my looks, and he's lost his interest, and spends his time and his jack on other dames, so Bob and the money he makes about keeps this shack going."

"I see! Yep, that's the way the world goes now, but you are a game little woman to take it so sensibly."

"What's the use of doin' different? Since us janes learned to do our own swearin', we don't do so much weepin' as we used to."

"Right you are. By the way, what is the name of this man who gets Bob his jobs? Maybe I could fix both the cabaret job and the private dance dates, too."

"That would be fine and dandy. Mike's poolroom, around the corner on First avenue."

"And where is the dance to-night? I'd like to see Bob in action and watch how he puts it over."

"She looked at him curiously a moment, then shrugged her spare shoulders.

"Well, it ain't a very swell affair; not one you might be proud to go to, so to speak, but them twenties sure do look good to me, so I don't say nothin'. It's on a barge at the foot of some street just north of here, and I guess they are a pretty mixed lot of folks. Bob says he hears them jabber in about ten different lingoes of a night. But he ain't afraid of nothin', and he knows we depend on that little old twenty-dollar bill."

Dan made her a courteous good-night, but after the door was closed he doubled his powerful hands and muttered with a grim look:

"Of all the dirty skunks! Dago Mike is going to hear from me. That story has got my goat, and no mistake."

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## CHAPTER THREE

ONCE on a time, which the oldsters will remember, vice was corraled into a well-defined locale—the old Cremorne, the Buckingham, the Haymarket and Harry Hills were landmarks.

But now vice careens in ermine and sables in the finest hotels, or hides in dirty cellars behind locked doors, and even seeps into private flats and disguises itself to a degree.

But Dan Foster knew the ropes, and from the few words of description he sensed that the dance on the barge would probably be a polyglot riot of cheap vice and unpoliced disorder.

Dan Foster had promised Annie, the cashier, that he would let her know of any developments, and he wanted her evidence, too, so he went directly to the restaurant and told her what he had uncovered of the case. Her indignation was fierce, and she would have flown to attack Dago Mike lone-handed if he had not restrained her. But she was in such a white heat of passion that he finally consented to taking her with him to the dance on the barge, only taking the precaution of Annie dressing as a boy. This was easy with her slim figure and short-bobbed hair. The night being cold, a cap and rough coat pulled high at the neck were sufficient disguise. She carried a pack of cigarettes that she puffed constantly, and she almost began to enjoy the sense of adventure, but her indignation seethed just the same.

In half an hour they drew up in a night-hawk taxi at the nearest corner and sneaked down to the gloomy-looking barge, moored amidst the dirty collection of odds and ends that tie up for winter in the Harlem River.

It looked dark and uninhabited from the shore, but they had gotten some private information of the devious way to board the old junk. A system of planks made a gangway that connected with another, and presently they were inside the place, heavily closed by boards and cloth drapes to shut out all light from the shore.

It was a never-to-be-forgotten scene when they finally got really to the centre of things. Annie, nervy as she was, felt glad of not being alone and of the little automatic that Dan had provided her with. She clutched it lovingly in the pocket of her coat.

Seemingly half the nations of earth had contributed to the scum of humanity that

danced in vicious abandon in the murky light. Chinamen, Japs, Eurasions, Hungarians, Italians and a hundred variations were gyrating on the worn old floor. But the girls were mostly white, forlorn creatures with wild, reckless eyes, and every last one of them with blondined hair.

In the midst of this blind Bob was playing as blithely and gayly as if it were the most innocent of summer picnics.

What he could not see he didn't know, and yet some weird emanation must have penetrated his nerve centres, for suddenly he stopped, and swinging his banjo over his head, he began to sing "The Radio Kiss." At the same instant some wary bird of a lookout saw the big form of Dan Foster and recognized him.

A peculiar whistle was blown, and in an instant there was pandemonium. Most of the lights went out, and the crowd of roughs and toughs, not knowing what the alarm might be, and all of them drunk on the worst kind of bootleg stuff, threw themselves into a scrimmage that was never before equaled in all of Harlem's wildest history.

There was another powerful reason for this mêlée; only about one-third of the crowd had been on the dancing floor. The rest were packed around the gambling centres, which had been going at high blast. There the losers were giving up their good money, and the winners were paid in phony twenty-dollar bills that Dago Mike manufactured. This was the ingenious method the counterfeiter devised for disposing of the spurious bills. Not a male biped of those orgies ever went home sober, and so how could they swear where or how these bills had gotten into their hands?

The fight was getting hot and furious, so Dan felt it would be safer for him to declare himself. In the one path of light remaining on the barge he flashed his badge, and with a pistol in his hand he fought his way backward, Annie close beside him, but not before he had taken possession of one of the piles of money before a roulette wheel.

They were almost to the gangplank when Annie screamed:

"Where is Bob? They will murder him! My God! where is Bob?"

Over all the din and horror rose a clear and piercing voice. It was singing the "Radio Kiss." Annie gave a glad cry and joined her fresh young tones to that catchy ditty. It is safe to say that no popular song of the day was ever sung in more gruesome surroundings. Nearer and nearer came Bob's voice, full and sonorous in the midst of hoarse shrieks and blows, for the fight was waging on every side.

Then a platoon of police ordered by Dan raided the place and found the mint that settled Dago Mike's fate.

An hour later the three friends were sitting in the Elite Restaurant eating a well-earned supper.

"Well, Mister Bob Chanticleer," laughed Annie, "does a genuine cabaret job appeal to you now?"

"You bet," said Bob enthusiastically, "if Nancy can be my cashier for life."

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## QUIT PRISON IN PAY PROTEST

GUARDS who keep the criminals in Sing Sing are protesting that the salary paid the first-year men is insufficient to live on and prison officials announced recently that six of them have resigned.

Warden Lawes will try to replace them by selecting applicants from the Civil Service list. The men who have thrown up the jobs assert that the cost of rent for married men or room and board for single men around the countryside near the prison is too expensive. Guards begin with a $1,200 salary and the pay increases each year for four years, until they receive a maximum of $1,600 per year. The complaints come chiefly from the first-year men. Besides those who have left the prison service, others have asked to be transferred to penal institutions upstate, where rent and food are cheaper.

# In the Vault

By T. F. T. WEST

YOUNG BOB GRANT turned slowly from the shouting, gesticulating throng about the stock quotation board in the offices of Bozeman Bros., brokers. His face was a peculiar white, the lips pressed close, drawn lines about his eyes and nostrils. His gray eyes had a dazed, far-away expression. As he turned his back on the board he shook the wrinkles from his coat in a mechanical manner, brushed an imaginary speck of dust away, settled the knot of his tie against the linen collar.

Curley McGowan, leaning inconspicuously against the wall, across the room, had been watching this bit of byplay in the absorbing drama of the afternoon's closing quotations from the Stock Exchange. McGowan noted Grant's look, his gesture and manner, and nodded slightly in complete understanding. He had seen many a man do that very thing as he rose, dead broke, from the gambling table and went out into the night—often to end everything with a gun.

Young Bob Grant was broke—cleaned out—his last nickel gone in a useless attempt to cover margins on a stock that kept dropping like a plummet. Curley McGowan, who had given Bob Grant the tip—a sure-thing inside tip to buy and hold for a sharp rise—knew exactly how broke Grant was.

Curley McGowan was not in the least displeased at the result. From the hour he had discovered the cashier of the Hadleyburg First National Bank playing the stocks in Bozeman Bros. office, McGowan had planned to bring about this tragedy. He had thrown himself in Grant's way, made his acquaintance, counselled him on the market. Grant had won in his first few ventures, which was McGowan's good luck, for it gave the young man greater respect for McGowan's advice. Now he was through, cleaned out, broke. McGowan knew that was bound to happen sooner or later.

Grant had dropped ten thousand dollars. McGowan knew the amount to a penny.

McGowan smiled inwardly as he hurried out of the office after Bob Grant, anxious not to let the cashier out of sight. It was always possible that a man in Grant's frame of mind might try to do something desperate. McGowan did not want Grant to try anything like that. Curley McGowan needed Bob Grant in his business—needed him alive and in his right mind.

McGowan followed his unconscious victim to a bench in Battery Park. He sauntered to him with every appearance of making a casual encounter. "Why, Grant! How's every little thing to-day? They breaking good for you?"

Bob Grant summoned a wan, wry grin that was not so very mirthful for all his effort. "They're not running at all—not any more——"

"You don't mean you've reformed and quit the market?"

"I mean I'm cleaned out. Shucks, you ought to know that if you saw the ticker this afternoon! Zenith Preferred hit the skids——"

"Yeah, I heard that," McGowan nodded. "I was looking for you in fact. Want to talk over some business——"

"Go away and let me suffer!" Grant groaned, gamely trying to seem humorous. "All I ask it is to die in peace——"

"Money in this proposition of mine," McGowan urged. "I know a little barroom where you can still get a drink. Come on, Grant! It's a chance for you to stage a come-back——"

Grant shook his head forlornly. "Go away," he muttered.

"This is important, Grant——"

"Damn you!" Grant cried, flaring up, "get away from me! I don't want to talk to you—or anybody else. Important! My own troubles are most important right now——"

McGowan bent close and whispered: "It might also be important to you, Mr. Bob Grant, if somebody told the directors of the Hadleyburg National that their cashier just lost ten thou. playing the stocks. How about that?"

Bob Grant turned white about the lips. He struggled to his feet, facing McGowan, who sneered at him. "You know?" he gasped.

"Yep. Knew it for some time."

"Look here McGowan, I can't have this get out. I can't, I tell you! If the bank finds out——"

McGowan managed a hearty laugh and clapped the young man on the shoulder, "Rats!" he cried boisterously; "I wouldn't spill the news to that hick bank! Me? Why should I? Ain't we good friends! Come on and have that drink."

"I'd rather not," Grant demurred. "Really——"

"Come along, Bob!"

Grant still hesitated. McGowan added in a different tone, a tone that suggested danger: "Look here, I'm a funny guy in a way. I'm willing to do you a good turn, you know. Willing to let you in on a good thing. But that don't mean I'm going to kneel and kiss your big toe to persuade you. Come along and talk business with me and everything is jake. If you don't come along—well, it ain't much trouble to drop a postcard to the folks in Hadleyburg and tell your boss I ran across his cashier blowing ten thousand dollars in a bucket shop——"

"That's my affair!" Grant said angrily. "I had three weeks vacation. If I choose to spend it in New York——"

"In a bucket shop," McGowan corrected and added meaningly, "and blowing ten thousand dollars. *Some money for a bank cashier to blow.*"

"The money was mine. A legacy. Do you mean to insinuate I stole that money?" Grant's fists doubled.

"Insinuate? Gee, no!" McGowan leaned closer, whispering, "You can't bluff me for a second. Of course you stole it—by juggling your books. What's more, you know damn well you've got to cover that shortage quick, before the state bank examiner gets around. Now, if you're willing to listen to a little reason, and help me out in a scheme of mine, I'll show you how to make ten times what you nicked your bank for. And if you don't listen to reason"—McGowan's look was ugly—"your bank is going to hear all about you inside the next hour. Now, will you come take a drink with me and talk business?"

Bob Grant remained silent a moment, his gray eyes studying McGowan's face. He saw a broad, determined, bulldog sort of face, partially shaded by a derby hat. In this new light he saw in McGowan a man of dangerous possibilities—a man perhaps not unused to the shady side of the law. Judging by McGowan's conversation, he contemplated involving him in something shady. Bob Grant learned more about McGowan in that minute than he had in his previous ten days acquaintance.

The young man flushed. "You've got the drop on me," he admitted coolly. "I'll take a drink—and talk things over."

Bob Grant lingered at Dora Kane's gate. He had good reason to linger, for on the side of the gate opposite him was Dora herself, a delightful blonde just past her twentieth birthday. Dora was Bob's fiancé.

To-night something beside Dora's potent charm made Grant linger. He had announced that he had but half an hour to stop, yet the half-hour had run into an hour. At the gate he was loath to go, strangely silent, strangely hesitant.

"Bob, what is it?" Dora asked suddenly.

"What is it? What——"

"Bob Grant, you know very well something's wrong!"

Grant started. "Wrong?" he echoed stupidly, making a poor pretense of candor as he added, "what nonsense!"

"Something is wrong," Dora insisted. "I'm not blind. All this week, since you've been back from your vacation, I've seen you only twice and both times you acted like this. Something is worrying you half to death and you won't tell me."

"Nothing to tell, dear."

"There is something to tell. Something happened while you were away in New York."

"Nothing happened."

"Bob! Is it something about your work—about the bank?"

Grant shook his head, maintaining a steady smile. But by his unconscious gasp at the question Dora guessed the answer. "Don't worry, dear," she whispered, patting his hand, "don't let that old bank business fret you. Things will come out all right."

Grant bent closer, his arms about her shoulders as he leaned across the gate.

"Dora," he pleaded earnestly, rapidly, "promise me something."

"Anything!"

"Whatever I do, whatever you hear, believe in me! Believe I have kept myself fit for you love."

"As if I could believe anything else!"

"And believe that I love you. Now I must go."

"Bob, please don't work to-night. Must you? You're tired, nervous, not fit to work."

"Got to work, Dora. I'm way behind on my books. Good-night—and be sure, don't forget that I love you—whatever happens."

Grant turned from the gate hurriedly and walked down the street with a determined sort of briskness.

As he neared the Hadleyburg bank a figure materialized from the deep shadow of the village street. A hand touched his elbow. Grant paused, breathing hard.

"When did you come?" he whispered.

"On the night train. Everything set for to-night?"

"If you insist on this fool thing——"

"You know me, Kid!" McGowan chuckled. "How about that night watchman? His wife sick still?"

"Yes."

"Then listen. I'll phone at ten o'clock, see? I tell him I'm the doctor and his old woman's dying. You'll be working there and that will fix it so he won't think he's taking too big a chance in running out home. It ought to take him an hour for the round trip out home and back?"

"Yes, a full hour."

"That's all jake, then. Now beat it. I'll scratch on the side window after I see the watchman leave. That's your cue that the street is clear and you can let me in."

Grant nodded silent assent. He hurried toward the bank. The thickset figure of Curley McGowan faded into the shadows of the night.

At ten o'clock, as Grant bent over his books, apparently absorbed in work, in reality listening with every nerve jumping, the arranged program began promptly. The telephone rang. Grant heard Older, the bank's night watchman, clumping to the instrument. He heard Older's side of the conversation.

The gray-haired watchman hurried to Grant's side. "Bad news from home, Bob! I—I don't know what to do."

"What's up, Older?" Grant heard himself ask the question with exactly the right shade of interest.

"My wife. Been sick, you know."

"Not worse!"

Older nodded mutely. "That was the doctor on the phone," he said with visible effort, his voice a monotone. "He says—Bob, he says, she—can't last out—an hour."

"By George, I'm sorry to hear that, old man!" Grant's hand caught the watchman's shoulder, clinging sympathetically.

"I guess I'd better call up Mr. Feenix," Older muttered. "I ought to be there when—when—— But, you see, I can't leave the bank unguarded. And by the time Feenix sends my relief maybe—maybe it would be—too late."

"Don't you fret about that," Grant was urging, his hand clapping the watchman's shoulder. "You hurry out home! I'm here, aren't I? I'll stay right here; or, if you don't come back, Older, I'll call the boss and get a man in your place. Beat it man; go quick!"

When the door had closed behind the

frightened watchman Bob Grant shook his head compassionately. "A dirty trick!" he cried aloud. "A dirty, underhanded trick! The poor devil's scared to death. The kind of a trick Curley McGowan would play."

A fingernail scratched against the plate-glass of the window near him. The blinds were down, but Grant understood the meaning of that sound. Curley McGowan was waiting for admittance.

Grant went to the side door of the bank, slipped the lock and opened it cautiously. McGowan's burly figure slipped inside with a grace and speed unusual in so large a man. Grant saw that the door was securely locked behind his visitor. "This way," he beckoned to McGowan. "As long as you stay behind this partition nobody can see you from the street."

McGowan was carrying a small hand-satchel. He set it down, sat himself in a chair, cocked his feet on another chair and, pushing back his derby hat, grinned widely at Grant. "This is a cinch," he observed genially.

"I tell you it's dangerous. If you want to keep out of jail you drop this scheme," Grant insisted, deadly earnest.

A change came over McGowan, a perceptible hardening of his resolution.. With impressive deliberation he produced a wicked pistol from his coat pocket and displayed it before Grant. "Come here," he growled, enforcing the command with the weapon. Grant came slowly close beside him. McGowan ran a practised hand through his pockets and under the coat, looking for concealed weapons. Grant was unarmed.

"Now," said McGowan, "listen to me. Listen, you poor simp, and don't forget anything I tell you. I took you into this as a partner. I was willing to give you your split on what we take out of the vault. Well, that stuff is off, see? All off! Partner! You got a streak of yellow wide as Fifth avenue! You ain't no partner of mine! You do what I tell you from now on. Maybe, if you're good, I'll let you have enough to pay back the bank what you stole."

"That's the kind of double-crosser you are, is it?" Grant exclaimed.

"Can that chatter! Don't get me sore! Boy, you got to be pretty good if you want to stay healthy to-night!" McGowan broke into a scornful laugh as Grant instinctively gave back before the flourishing pistol. "You poor boob!" he taunted. "Trying to advise me about my business! Why, listen, Sucker; I framed up this job five weeks ago, the first day I saw you in Bozeman's office playing the market. 'There's my meat,' I said when I saw you. That guy has got the run of a nice, fat little bank, and when I get through working on him he's going to let me into its vault, where I can help myself? From that moment on you never stood a ghost of a chance. I was working on you. It was my tip lost you the ten thousand on Zenith Pfd. I did it on purpose to use you, you boob! With all your big talk and bluffing you've been doing exactly what I told you to do ever since. Now, keep on doing what I say or you'll get hurt bad. I guess we understand each other, hey?"

Grant nodded reluctantly.

"Now, show me that vault," McGowan growled. "I want to clean up and get away from here. And no monkey tricks with burglar alarms, mind you, or I'll drill you so full of lead they'll never be able to identify the body."

"This way," Grant muttered. He led the way to the steel doors of the bank's cash vault. While McGowan watched, warning him repeatedly that he understood every type of automatic alarm made, the younger man disconnected the protective device and began unlocking the big door.

"Make it snappy," McGowan warned; "people can see this door through the front window. I don't care to be seen."

The steel door swung open as he spoke. McGowan pushed Grant in ahead of him.

"Suppose I pull the door shut," Grant suggested. "It would look better if somebody happened to glance in the window."

"Careful of that lock when you do it! I don't take any chances getting locked in any bank vault!"

McGowan superintended, while Grant

pulled the big door almost, but not quite, shut. "Now, show me the coin, and be quick about it," he ordered.

Grant led him across the small vault to the neatly arranged steel coin boxes. During the ensuing twenty minutes the burly crook worked fast, sorting out the bulky small change, filling his bag with the bills of large denominations. Nor did convertible securities escape his attention, and Grant was kept busy advising which bonds were not registered and safe to handle.

Once in the vault a change came over Bob Grant. The cashier seemed anxious to please his criminal master. He advised him freely of the contents of each valuable package, and with his own hands helped McGowan fill his satchel with the cream of the bank's wealth. Evidently the young man regretted provoking McGowan's wrath, and was doing his best to get back in McGowan's good graces. McGowan thought the change perfectly natural. Grant, he figured, was afraid he wouldn't get his promised share of loot. McGowan smiled wisely. He dropped his pistol into his coat pocket.

The satchel was filled. McGowan began to close it.

"Just a second," said Grant; "there's a bundle of Liberty four-and-a-quarters over here, about three thousand in all." He began searching toward the front of the vault.

"Never mind that junk," McGowan growled. "I got plenty." He chuckled. "Here, kid; better stick this in your pocket for your trouble!" He tossed a bundle of currency at Grant.

Grant fumbled the catch, and the bundle landed by the vault door. Grant scrambled for it, McGowan still chuckling at his greedy haste.

McGowan's chuckle ended abruptly at a soft, stealthy, whispering sound. The vault door had closed. Grant was rising from his knees. He leaned his back against the great steel door, and smiled coolly at McGowan.

"The door!" McGowan gasped.

"It's closed—and locked," Grant said amiably. "Of course the only way to open it is from outside. I'm afraid you and I are going to be detained."

"How the devil——"

"I closed it," Grant admitted sweetly.

McGowan whipped the pistol from his pocket. With a snarl of animal rage he raised its barrel.

"Just a second before you shoot," Grant suggested, cool as a November morning. "If they take you for my murder to-morrow morning, that means the electric chair. If they find me alive you may not get more than twenty years. But remember, whatever you do there's no way to get out of this vault until somebody connected with the bank lets you out. Murder or plain robbery, they'll get you!"

McGowan dropped the pistol as if it were red hot. He understood that every word Grant said was exactly true. He kicked the weapon from him hastily. "Blast your soul," he gasped, "you did that—on purpose!"

"I certainly did," Bob Grant smiled. "I gave you rope enough to hang yourself. It's the best way to deal with your kind.

"Listen to me," he exclaimed. "It's my turn to tell you something. You must have figured you were pretty bright advising me, so I lost all my money on that Zenith stock. I can see you laughing about that. It looked pretty soft to you, this job of matching your superior city brains against a poor hick bank cashier from Hadleyburg! Then, when I was broke, you figured you had me just where you wanted me. You advised me if I didn't do exactly as you said and fix it so you could get into this vault, you'd tell the bank about my speculating, my shortage would be discovered and I'd go to jail for it, didn't you? I'll bet you figured you were a regular genius among crooks, eh, McGowan?"

McGowan gave him no answer. He was breathing hard and his fists were tight, heavy shoulders bowed forward. He panted with the desire to leap on his jailer and beat him to a pulp, but something stronger than passion held him back. Fear chained him to that spot, fear born of the knowledge that whatever he did to Grant would be known in the morning and would result in longer imprisonment added to the inevitable sentence waiting him. McGowan, half

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mad with rage, had to stand and listen to whatever Grant chose to tell him.

"Yes!" Grant jeered, "I guess you thought you were the Napoleon Bonaparte of crooks, framing all that! You big boob! All you did was to fall into my trap!

"You were so bright! Well, you made one mistake, McGowan, one small mistake. Because you're a crook yourself, you think everybody is crooked. When you saw me drop a fortune on that stock, knowing I was cashier of this bank, all you could figure was that I stole the money from the bank. That's just the way your crooked brain works. Well, there was your mistake. I didn't steal the money. That ten thousand was an inheritance, just like I told you. Of course I didn't want the bank to know what I was doing with it. That would lose me my job, and I need the job because I'm about to be married. But just because I took the money and came to New York on the quiet in the hope of doubling or tripling it, playing the stocks did not mean I was a crook. The only trouble is, McGowan, you're not really bright enough to understand things like that!

"Furthermore," Grant went on coolly, "when you came to me in Battery Park you tipped your hand. Even a hick bank cashier from Hadleyburg could smell something rotten about you. So when you thought you were kidding me along, it was I who was kidding you along. And I kidded you right into this vault, where I wanted you, and, what's more, locked you in while you, in your fat-headed complacence, thought you were getting the laugh on me." Grant laughed, and McGowan gave another growl of rage. Grant watched him pace the vault like a madman, and was not afraid.

McGowan turned on him finally, beaten and whining. "Look," he argued, "look here, Bob! Don't miss a big bet like this! I'll split with you. I'll go fifty-fifty. I'll give you two-thirds; I'll give you the whole damn thing if you know of some way to let me out of this in time to get away!"

"No use," Grant said. "I can't do anything. The door's locked. And if I could, I wouldn't. For three reasons. First, I'm on the level with my boss, but of course you can't understand that.

"Second, I don't deserve to get back one cent of the ten thousand I lost. I had it coming to me for being fool enough to speculate in stocks. But I learned my lesson. I won't try that again!

"The third reason. It just occurs to me that the bank might make me a nice little present for putting a crook like you behind the bars where you belong, and I need that money to start a home of my own."

And in that guess Bob Grant was right. The day he married Dora Kane the Hadleyburg Bank showed its gratitude by a substantial wedding gift in gilt-edged, conservative four-and-a-half-per-cent. municipal bonds.

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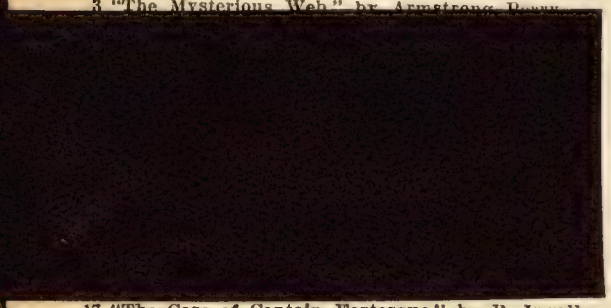
**The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.**

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong [illegible]



17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by R. Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith S. Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by B. Poynter
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieut. Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by Wm. H. Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Chas. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura R. Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William H. Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by E. Rosemon.
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by Wm. H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by C. F. Oursler.
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99 "The Cross," by W. S. Ingram.
100 "The Secret Service Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie and Elliot Balestier.
101 "A Crimson Price," by Elliott Lester.
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104 "The Little Red Book," by J. Alexander Young.
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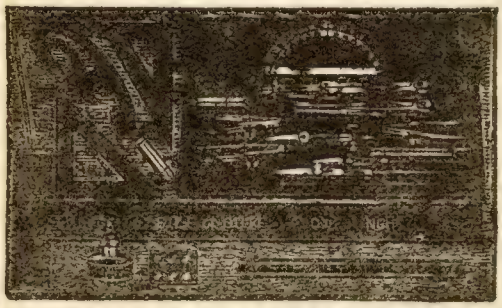

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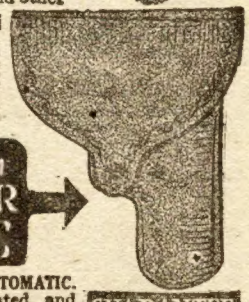

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